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# PARENTAL AND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL CHOICE IN THE CASE OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SUPPORT

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*To those parents whose
children receive support*

*&*

*To my family*

# ABSTRACT

This dissertation is positioned at the intersection of sociological studies on school choice and studies on educational support systems. The research in this dissertation focuses on the school choices by parents whose children receive support in first or seventh grade of comprehensive education and the organisation of comprehensive education in the municipalities where the participants live. This dissertation consists of four articles on parents' views of children's schooling or student allocation by social class, gender and level of support. Additionally, discussion of the results in relation to each other and the broader context of the organisation of comprehensive education. The first study (study 1) consists of three case studies of children diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and of interviews with the children, their parents and teachers (n=11) to uncover these stakeholders' views on the appropriate settings for these children. The second study (study 2) analyses registry data (n=1428) on one municipality's allocation of seventh graders to classrooms (i.e. special education, regular and selective classrooms) by gender, ethnicity and level of support. The third and fourth studies (studies 3 and 4) examine the results of a questionnaire (n=208) on schooling choices, support level and social class completed by the parents. Finally, the dissertation reports findings from interviews (n=6) with the comprehensive education directors of the different municipalities where the parents in the studies live. To summarize, the articles encompassed in the thesis examine the choices by parents of children with support needs, while the overall dissertation focuses on the organisation of comprehensive education to understand actual inclusion and exclusion in the organisation and structure of the Finnish comprehensive education system.

The results show that some municipalities use the school choice space – institutional (e.g. Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011) and social (Kosunen, 2016) –, and others do not; consequently, the organisation of comprehensive education varies across municipalities. Some municipalities lean more towards the adhocracies described by Skrtic (1991a; 1991b; 1995a; 1995b; 1995c), in which children are educated together regardless of their differences. The preliminary investigation of these municipalities studied shows that this shift is not motivated only by cost effectiveness. The organisation of comprehensive education in other municipalities tends to polarise children's educational paths, offering more selective classes and special schools and classrooms.

Furthermore, the findings indicate strong belief in the Finnish school system among the study informants as the majority of parents are satisfied with the support

that their children receive and their children's school allocations. The most important consideration for all parents is that their children be educated in neighbourhood schools to be able to socialise and function near home. The less support the children receive, the more important neighbourhood school allocation is to the parents. Most dissatisfaction with schooling among the families in this study is with allocation of children to schools or classrooms the parents do not want their children to attend. Not many parents had chosen selective classes or to live in certain neighbourhoods to access certain catchment areas, however those parents who did, had mostly an upper-class background. In addition, four types of comprehensive education organisation (inclusive, (small) traditional, traditional segregated and centralised) are identified.

The complex differences in how municipalities organise comprehensive education are not necessarily visible to parents. During the dual system (general support and special support) implemented before 2010, children with special support needs were mostly segregated into special schools and classrooms, and other children stayed in general education classrooms in neighbourhood schools. Today, the allocations to neighbourhood schools and other than neighbourhood schools could be described to be somewhat flipped in comparison to the prior system. The children of mostly upper-class parents leave neighbourhood schools, particularly general classrooms, to enter selective classes, while the rest of the children attend to neighbourhood school. Today, upper-class children and children with severe support needs leave neighbourhood schools and classrooms, and the rest stay.

**Key words:** School, choice, support system, municipality, special education

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja sijoittuu koulutussosiologian, koulutuspolitiikan ja erityispedagogiikan yhtymäkohtaan. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan oppimisen ja koulunkäynnin tukea saavien oppilaiden vanhempien tekemiä kouluvalintoja ensimmäisellä ja seitsemännellä luokalla, sekä perusopetuksen järjestämistä niissä kuudessa kunnassa, joissa tutkimukseen osallistuneet asuvat. Väitöskirja koostuu neljästä artikkelista, jotka käsittelevät vanhempien näkemyksiä lastensa koulusta ja koululuokista, sekä oppilaiden sijoittumisesta koululuokille yhteiskuntaluokan, sukupuolen ja lapsen oppimisen- ja koulukäynnin tuen tason perusteella. Väitöskirjan yhteenveto-osiossa tarkastellaan artikkeleiden tuloksia suhteessa toisiinsa sekä suhteutetaan niitä laajemmin kuntien perusopetuksen järjestämisen kontekstiin. Ensimmäinen artikkeli (study 1) on tapaustutkimus kolmesta oppilaasta, joilla on ADHD-diagnoosi (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Tässä ensimmäisessä artikkelissa tarkastellaan diagnoosin saaneiden lasten, heidän vanhempiensa ja opettajien näkemyksiä (n=11) lapsille määrätystä opetuspaikasta. Toisessa artikkelissa (study 2) analysoidaan rekisteriaineiston (n=1428) avulla yhden kunnan seitsemäsluokkalaisten sijoittumista eri luokkamuotoihin (erityisopetuksen luokkiin, yleisluokkiin sekä painotetun opetuksen luokkiin), sukupuolen, kielen ja tuen tason mukaan. Kolmannessa ja neljännessä artikkelissa (studies 3 & 4) tutkitaan kyselyn avulla (n=208) vanhempien näkemyksiä kouluvalinnoista suhteessa lapsen tuen tasoon sekä yhteiskuntaluokkaan. Lisäksi väitöskirjan yhteenvedossa tarkastellaan niiden kuuden kunnan perusopetuksen johtajien (n=6) näkemyksiä perusopetuksen järjestämisestä haastatteluin, joissa tutkimukseen osallistuvat perheet asuivat. Yhteenvedossa pohditaan erityisesti perusopetusjärjestelmän rakenteita, jotka lisäävät oppilaiden osallisuutta tai segregaatiota eli eriytymistä.

Tulokset osoittavat vanhempien vahvaa uskoa suomalaiseen peruskoulutusjärjestelmään, sillä suurin osa vanhemmista on tyytyväisiä lapsensa saamaan tukeen ja lasten koulupaikkaan. Vanhemmille oli tärkeää, että heidän lapsensa kävivät koulua lähikoulussa, jotta he voisivat oppia toimimaan itsenäisesti osana sosiaalista lähiympäristöään. Mitä vähemmän vanhemmat arvioivat lapsensa tarvitsevan tukea, sitä tärkeämpi lähikoulu oli vanhemmille. Lapsen koulupaikkaan tyytymättömiä vanhempia oli vain vähän, mutta suurin osa tyytymättömyydestä kohdistui lasten sijoittumiseen vanhempien näkemysten vastaisiin kouluihin tai koululuokkiin. Lisäksi, vain muutamien vastanneiden lapset sijoittuivat painotetun opetuksen luokkiin tai pitivät tiettyä lähikoulua tärkeänä asuinalueensa valikointikriteerinä. Tällaiset vanhemmat tulivat ylemmistä yhteiskunta luokista.

Kuntien osalta tulokset osoittavat, että perusopetuksen järjestäminen vaihtelee kuntien välillä. Osa kunnista käyttää laajasti kouluvalintaa lasten sijoittamisessa kouluihin ja luokkiin, toiset puolestaan vähemmän ja osa ei lainkaan. Lisäksi, osa kunnista käytti Skrticin (1991a, 1991b, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c) kuvaaman adhokratia-mallin suuntaan pyrkivää peruskoulutuksen järjestämisstrategiaa, jossa lapsia opetetaan inklusiivisesti eli yhdessä heidän eroistaan riippumatta. Näiden tutkittujen, inklusiivisempaan perusopetukseen pyrkivien kuntien osalta, alustavat tulokset osoittavat, ettei muutoksen taustalla ole vain kuntapäättäjien motivaatio kustannustehokkuudesta, vaan pyrkimys inkluusioon. Sellaisissa kunnissa, joissa kouluvalintaa käytettiin laajasti, perusopetuksen järjestämistapa eriytti lasten koulutuspolkuja; yleisluokkien ohelle tarjottiin valikoivaa painotettua opetusta, sekä erityislapsille kokonaan segregoivia erityiskouluja. Näin ollen perusopetuksen järjestäminen vaihtelee kuntien välillä. Tutkimuksessa erotettiin neljä erilaista tapaa järjestää perusopetusta kunnissa: osallistava, (pieni kunta) perinteinen, perinteinen polarisoiva sekä keskitetty.

Ennen vuotta 2010 toteutettua erityisopetuksen reformia, erityistukea tarvitsevat lapset olivat enimmäkseen erityiskouluissa tai -luokilla, kun taas muut lapset olivat suurimmaksi osaksi lähikoulujen yleisluokilla. Nykyään oppilaiden sijoittuminen lähikouluihin ja muihin kuin lähikouluihin on monimutkaisempaa. Useimmiten korkeakoulutettujen ja hyvin toimeentulevien vanhempien lapset hakevat valikoiduille painotetun opetuksen luokille joko lähikoulussa tai muissa kouluissa, kun taas muut lapset sijoittuvat lähikoulun yleisluokille. Toisin sanoen, hyvin toimeentulevien lapset ja lapset, jotka tarvitsevat paljon tukitoimia sijoittuvat lähikouluista muihin kouluihin. Erot kuntien välisistä perusopetuksen järjestämisestämistavoista eivät välttämättä ole selviä eri kuntatoimijoille, saati vanhemmille.

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Sincerely,
Sonia
27.3.2018 Room 326, Edu

# CONTENTS

# LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1.  Lempinen, S. (2016). Towards inclusive schooling policies in Finland: a multiple-case study from policy to practice, Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research, DOI:10.1080/15017419.2016.1182942

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3.  Lempinen, S. & Niemi, A.-M. (2017). Special support and neighbourhood school allocation in Finland: A study on parental school choice. European Journal of Special Needs Education. p. 102-177. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856 257.2017.1300167
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The school choices of parents with children in comprehensive education both in Finland and elsewhere have been considered regarding social class, policies, and education systems from kindergarten to higher education. The intersection of social class and educational support in the United Kingdom and North America has been researched to a certain extent (Allen, 2004; Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Nind, 2008; Riddell, Brown & Duffield, 1994). However, no researchers have studied parental choice in relation to school choice for children who receive intensified or special support in Finland.

The Finnish education system has attracted global attention for its 2012 PISA scores (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). However, more recent PISA and TIMSS scores obtained by Finland have declined, sparking efforts to determine the reasons. In a Swedish follow-up study on the 2011 TIMSS, Hansen, Gustafsson and Rosén (2014) find greater variation between comprehensive education classrooms in Finland than other Nordic countries. Some Finnish researchers have verified this finding using independent data from different municipalities (Bernelius, 2013; Kosunen, 2016; Kupiainen, 2016; Seppänen, 2003; Seppänen, Kalalahti, Rinne & Simola, 2015). Recent studies have also tied the differences between schools and classrooms to children's school allocation and neighbourhood segregation, as well as to school choice and parental socioeconomic status.

An ongoing debate questions whether children should be placed in classrooms based on attainment and learning with the aim to achieve efficiency (Loveless, 2009) or the aim to achieve equality (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992). Attainment-based grouping as such was eliminated in Finland in the 1980s; however, selective classes are an echo of this eliminated attainment-based learning. A shift towards school choice and increased social class differences (Gini coefficient), area segregation and municipal differences can be observed to contribute growing segmentation of schools and classrooms (e.g. Seppänen et al., 2015). This ongoing tension or dilemma between two paradigms, (as Skrtic would call them (1995a)); school choice and inclusive values (see article 2) is central to this dissertation.

This dissertation has a two-fold goal to investigate parents' school choices, particularly in relation to the municipal organisation of comprehensive education. More specifically, this dissertation sheds light on what parents want and why in school choices for their children receiving support. Furthermore, this dissertations sheds light on municipal ways of organizing comprehensive education, in those municipalities which were in the sub-studies. This dissertation compares and investigates previous

research and policies to understand the paradigm shift within education policy and organisation of education. Regarding practice, I investigate how municipalities organise support, and reflect on such organisation using Skrtic's (1991) theoretical construct of adhocracy,[1] considering the studied municipalities' inclusive and exclusive organisation of comprehensive education for children who receive support. The parents' access to choice and their children's preferences and support needs are considered in light of relationalist theories. This dissertation is anchored partly in Magnússon's (2015) dissertation, which analyses school choice and special education in Sweden and leans heavily on Skrtic's work. Anchoring partly in Magnússon's work also allows this dissertation to consider and compare with Sweden, whose lead Finland has often followed in political changes concerning the welfare state.

Finnish education is organised so that from the first to the ninth school year, practically all children study in public schools that provide free comprehensive education. Educational routes separate after compulsory education as at 16 years old, pupils apply for upper-secondary education in either general and academic or vocational programmes (Niemi & Rosvall, 2013). Recent shifts towards neoliberal freedom of choice policies have opened divisions that further separate children's school paths (e.g. Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen, 2006) in comprehensive education. In line with Seppänen (2006; see also Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen et al., 2012; Seppänen et al., 2015), this dissertation considers parental school choices in relation not only to regular and selective classes in neighbourhood and non-neighbourhood schools but also to special education classrooms and schools, which have not previously been studied.

According to the Finnish National Board of Education (2015), comprehensive education is based on the philosophy of inclusion and is 'the same for all'. In the 1990s, Finland signed the Salamanca Agreement, pledging to foster inclusive values in society and the educational system. Nevertheless, special needs education has long held an essentially separate position in the development of the Finnish comprehensive school system (Kivirauma, Klemelä & Rinne, 2006). Thus, in the planning for the 2011 reform of Finnish educational legislation (Basic Education Act 642/2010), one objective was to end the increasing use of special educational provision (Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen, 2015).

Currently, all pupils in Finnish comprehensive schools receive general educational support. If general support is not sufficient as determined by a pedagogical assessment, pupils receive intensified support under personalised

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[1]  Adhocracy is a flexible, informal system of organisation and management in contrast to rigid bureaucracy.

learning plans. If the intensified support is also insufficient, again as determined by a pedagogical evaluation, pupils are entitled to special education support under official administrational decisions. (Basic Education Act 642/2010.)

The notion of choice in this dissertation derives from the neoliberal discourse on freedom of choice and individual acts of choosing. Since the 1990s, the Finnish education system has included selective classes, stemming from the music teaching method, which spurred the development of emphasised (entails more music learning than in non-music emphasized classrooms) classes in music teaching in the late 1960s. Later, during the 1990s, emphasised teaching, or the allocation of pupils to particular groups, spread to science, sports and drama, and it continues to be seen in different forms throughout Finland. (Seppänen & Rinne, 2015.)

Rationalities of choice can be considered to be outwardly exclusionary educational mechanisms fuelled usually by competition but also to be intrinsically understood actions fuelled by personal values. In this dissertation, outward exclusionary educational mechanism are considered as the means in which different municipalities allow and implement school choices, such as the amount and variety of selective classes as well as difference entrance methods, such as aptitude tests to these specific classrooms. By intrinsically understood actions is meant the way parents from different backgrounds rationalize and make schooling decisions. School choices are therefore an interplay between these educational mechanisms and personal actions. Ball (2003) considers choice made by an actor to be an enactment somewhere between rational and irrational actions, made possible by the inclusion and exclusion principles of structures, in this case, the organisation of comprehensive education. By inclusion and exclusion principles in the organization of comprehensive education is meant the possibilities that are made easier or harder for parents to access classrooms and schools behind school choice mechanisms, depending on the persons knowledge and ability as well as in this case the support need of the child. Social exclusion theory, which is greatly influenced by Weber (1961), views education as a field for competition and social exclusion, where qualifications serve as a sorting device. According to this theory, people use 'strategic behaviour and rational action' in making their personal school choices, seeing education as 'investment good' (Ball, 2003, 16). Furthermore, relationalist theorists, following Bourdieu (1990), argue that these strategic behaviours and rational actions are generated from the habitus (the intrinsic mechanisms that portray outwards) driven by social class position. This dissertation adopts a view similar to Ball's (2003) that although the act of choosing in itself may be rational, the person choosing is driven towards the choice by intrinsic values (habitus) rooted in

the person's history, relations, social class and background in a place with a certain culture, hence the choice can also be seen as irrational.

Alongside relationalist notions, this dissertation leans on critical pragmatist views, contrasting the structures of municipal education organisation against the utopia of adhocracy (Skrtic, 1991a; 1991b). A utopia entails a notion of a value that the organisation of education should accomplish. This notion of striving towards utopia makes this dissertation political as it is, in this sense, value driven. Although in the pragmatist view, things are neutral by their mere existence, by any action it becomes non-neutral, as we act in order to influence one another (Dewey, 1911). It is these actions of non-neutrality that are considered in this dissertation to see what the organisation of comprehensive education does and produces.

The next two chapters (2 and 3) present a review of the literature in two areas of study: school choice and special education arrangements. I next describe the evolution of school choice.

# 2.   SCHOOL CHOICE IN COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

## 2.1    School choice policy and its history in Finland

School choice policy—the option for families to choose schools other than those assigned by municipalities and the option for schools to partly select the student body through emphasised teaching—was first introduced into comprehensive education in Finland through the 1999 Basic Education Act reform (628/1998, 6§; 28§) (Seppänen, 2006). At the same time, the notion of the pupil evolved into the notion of a learner in the core curriculum (Simola, 1995, 126), and the process-like, general-aimed curriculum gave schools freedom to determine content (Varjo, 2007, 119).

During the 1990s, local actors assumed the role of the centralised government amid changes in the style of public governance, particularly decentralisation, accountability, managerialism and competition (Johannesson et al., 2002). Especially, decentralisation, or the moving of decision-making power closer to those affected by decisions (Bray, 1999), has increased local or municipal power. This process is widely believed to more efficiently use resources (Nordin, 2014). Generally, in school choice, the decision-making power of individual stakeholders, such as principals, has been strengthened (Juusenaho, 2004). This emphasise on the role of actors can be seen in the interviews with municipal comprehensive-education directors in this dissertation.

The conceptualisations of decision-making in the market-driven approach to education can be related to local or municipal education systems in Finland. Typically, these education systems, called quasi-markets, are driven by private actors and emphasise governing competition between schools (Green, Wolf & Leney, 1999; Seppänen, 2006). The new style of public governance has advanced more in other Nordic countries than Finland; for instance, in Sweden (see Magnusson, 2015), freedom of choice has flourished, and privatised schools have been introduced into the comprehensive education system. In Finland, the government still controls the comprehensive education system. However, the decentralisation of power to local municipalities since the 1990s, as well as further expansion of school choice and deregulation of school profiling, has opened opportunities for school choice markets, leading to the polarisation of municipalities (Nyysölä, 2004).

As concepts or targets of research, education markets can be viewed from different perspectives: ideological (school markets), governmental (quasi-markets), regional (local school markets) and experiential (lived school markets) perspectives (Seppänen, 2006, 23). An international comparative study shows that innovation

in quasi-market education systems has centred on administration, marketing and branding rather than educational methods and classroom practices (Lubienski, 2009). In this dissertation, Finnish school politics are understood to have arisen from the social and historical settings of municipalities and local organisation unique to the Finnish context. The great variance in the organisation of comprehensive education and choice is dependent on municipalities but is also related to the historical roots of education organisation in old, established cities and newer cities.

The economic education market opens when pupils move among schools, and public funding follows pupils, not schools, so schools must seek to attract pupils. Usually, these market-driven approaches are linked to the emergence of right-wing coalitions with neoliberal values and agendas, which emphasis the customer in the education market and embrace freedom of choice. (Apple, 1997, 2000; Ball, 1990.) The paradigm shift (Magnusson, 2015; Skrtic, 1991a) from a communal to an individual understanding of education, from a state-governed, centralised system to a consumer-oriented market system has prompted the concept of individual democracy and a new rationality of education (Popkewitz, 2000, 2009; Thomas & Loxley, 2007) and precipitated a paradigm shift from equity to excellence (Labaree, 2010; Skrtic, 1991a, 1991b). Already, the Basic Education Act (1998) has been described as a landmark transition from social equity to individual equity in Finnish education policy (Simola et al., 2015).

Although the neoliberal discourse of freedom of choice has gained ground in the Finnish education system (Lempinen, Berisha & Seppänen, 2016; Seppänen et al., 2015), the government continues to insist on the overriding importance of neighbourhood school allocation (Seppänen & Rinne, 2015). Since 1999, the term *school district* has been eliminated from law (Varjo, Kalalahti & Seppänen, 2015). Instead of a district with one school attended by children from surrounding neighbourhoods, catchment areas, based on the catchment area principle or the neighbourhood school allocation principle, consists of a geographical area that may include many schools from which neighbourhood schools can be designated depending on municipal politics. In other words, the neighbourhood school or the catchment area school does not have to be the geographically closest school pupil´s home. Every municipality has the responsibility to assign pupils to catchment area schools where they will start compulsory education. The law states that all pupils are to be assigned to schools based on short and safe journeys between home and school. Municipalities, though, have made a vast variety of interpretations of 'safe and short journey', as seen in this study. (see also Varjo et al., 2015.)

Similarly, municipalities regulate the organisation of parental school choices in different areas of Finland (Seppänen et al., 2015). Municipalities can choose whether

to organise selective classes within all, none or some schools, as well how pupils enter selective classes, whether an aptitude test is administered (Basic Education Act 228/1998, 28§) and whether the first–come–first–served principle or children's interests and not their skills (a rarely used approach proposed by researchers) rule. In this dissertation, the institutional space of school markets (Taylor, 2002), where schools are governed and organised, consists of a municipality in the Finnish context (Varjo et al., 2015). A space generally is formed by social conventions and institutional structures (Lefebvre, 1991; also Skrtic, 1991a), and in this case, local and municipal institutional school choice space arises from the varied organisation and governance of school choice in municipalities (Varjo et al., 2015). Municipalities determine how open or closed the school choice space is (Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011). The processes and reforms influenced by discourses of excellence (Skrtic, 1991a, 1995) and educational attainment (Apple, 2004) point towards new relationships among actors on different levels (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004). Such reform of personal attainment redefines citizens by establishing the qualities and competences necessary for success in society (Popkewitz, 2008). Thus, people with certain qualities do not fit this narrowed definition of citizens. In other words, pupils with special education needs are not meant to fit (Kivirauma et al., 2006; Slee, 2011; Skrtic, 1991a).

Despite the strong stress on neighbourhood school allocation in Finnish education policy, pupils do not necessarily receive special support to study in their catchment area schools. The most recent reform of support in 2010 did not prioritise neighbourhood schools for all pupils. (see Mietola & Niemi, 2014.) Instead, under the reform, the organisation of special support has to take into account of pupils' rights and facilities to arrange teaching in regular education, partly *or* entirely in special education classes *or* in another suitable setting (Basic Education Act 642/2010, 17§). Consequently, differences in the organisation of special needs education arise among municipalities, and the special education alignment of any municipality (and school) can restrict both the idea of neighbourhood school allocation and possibilities for parental choice (Mietola, 2014; Niemi, 2015; Simola et al., 2015). This alignment is central to this dissertation.

## 2.2    School choice studies from abroad to Finland: whose choice?

Parental school choices have been studied widely, especially in the UK, the United States and France. These countries have long histories of hierarchical societies based on social classes to a much greater extent than Nordic countries. These nations have long-standing traditions of people with different backgrounds having access

to certain schools and thus greater likelihood of obtaining certain work and social positions. For example, numerous researchers have studied UK school choice at all levels of education, from preschool (Vincent & Ball, 2001; Vincent et al., 2004) and comprehensive education to upper-secondary school (e.g. Ball & Vincent, 1998; Ball, 2003; Reay & Lucey, 2003) and higher education (Ball et al., 2002; Reay et al., 2001; Whitty, 2001). Due to the historically rooted social hierarchy, the UK yields much clearer evidence of neighbourhood and social class segregation, joblessness and other inequalities in society, which affect educational opportunities and vice versa, as can be seen in the preceding studies.

Thus, the relationship between urban (municipal) school choice space, distance, education and inequality is relatively simple as pupils and schools with specific characteristics are spread around the space in relative ways (Hamnett & Butler, 2013). According to Ball et al. (1995), parental choice in the context of cities arises from a combination of space, social class and concrete choice. Hence, education research has much discussed the influence of social class position (e.g. Ball, 2003; van Zanten, 2005; Weber, 1961). Generally, school choice studies argue that those in the position to use 'market power to gain a competitive advantage' do so (Ball, 2003, p. 20). Moreover, 'class positions and perspectives are produced from and invested with the traces of earlier choices, improvisations and opportunities as well as being inflected by chance' (Ball, 2003, p. 7) As seen in the previous section (2.1), the use of social strategies depends on the local context (e.g. Kosunen, 2016; van Zanten, 2011), including in this dissertation. The most common way to study school choice is to examine the governance mechanisms of school choice (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Lauder et al., 1999; Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011), neighbourhood and social segregation caused by school choice (Bernelius, 2013a; Butler & Robson, 2003; Butler & Hamnett, 2007), prestige in social positions and school markets (van Zanten, 2011) and the micro-level effects related to pupil selection (Rajander, 2010). Thus, school choice mechanisms are studied in policies to practices.

With regards to social classes, it has been shown that the working class tends to use neighbourhood schools (van Zanten, 2001), while the middle and upper classes are more likely to send their children to schools further away (van Zanten, 2009). The ability to cover transportation costs to schools opens up special mobility and access (Barthon & Monfroy, 2010). Middle-class parents usually consider the social and ethnic diversity of the schools where they intend to settle (Boterman, 2013) and try to avoid long schools journeys and avoid intimidating situations in certain neighbourhoods (Butler & Robson, 2003; Butler et al., 2007).

Usually, mothers and their education backgrounds affect schooling decisions for children (Seppänen, 2006; van Zanten, 2009). The choices made are not only

a matter of consumerist optimising but are also loaded with personal and social symbolic (Bloomfield, Cucchiara & McNamara Horvat, 2014). Choice is not merely a consumerist discourse or an action but involves the ethical utilisation of rights, duties and responsibilities by class-obedient decision-makers in the education market (Bowe, Ball & Gerwirtz, 1994; Skeggs, 2004). The responsibility of choosing rightly may be eased by choosing the local, neighbourhood school, which does not necessitate a choice (Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007; van Zanten, 2009). Technocrats tend to prefer private schools as they offer more demanding classes (van Zanten, 2009). In the Finnish context, it is easier to not choose and let the municipality or the professionals choose rightly for the child.

This study (as do many studies in educational field) adopts the conceptualisation of social class put forth by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992; see also Goldthorpe, 1996). Conceptualisations of social classes often homogenise and over-simplify categories (Vincent & Tomlinson, 1997), as later discussed in regards to the limitations of the current study. Considerations of social class are usually focused on economics and upper classes. Class is embedded in the culture rather than the larger economic-oriented exchanges (Skeggs, 2004). Cultural resources have local value for individuals but not the larger system of exchange; therefore, class is constructed not by the economic sphere but by the cultural sphere. What is important for different classes in various cultures then is often overlooked, especially when considering the working class (Skeggs, 2004). This reasoning also offers a critique of Bourdieu's theory on capitals, which, as explained later, concentrates on economic-based exchanges rather than cultural beings. Furthermore, the education system embracing middle-class values has left the working class in pathologised positions, as middle-class parents move and create barriers between their children and those from the working classes (Reay, 2004; van Zanten, 2011). Research on parental choice has focused on the relationship of educational choice with social class, ethnicity and gender, which have attracted great attention in the scholarly community (e.g. Gillborn et al., 2012; Lucey & Reay, 2002; Reay et al., 2011; Vincent et al., 2012a). In the UK context, mixing of classes in schools is minimal, or horizontal (Ball et al., 2004). In contrast, some municipalities use a vertical mix of classes, or a creative mix, when they optimise allocation to a variety of catchment area schools (Ball et al., 2004).

Finland has not opened up school choice to the same extent as the Swedish education system, where private actor's market schools to pupils, who choose to apply to attend their desired schools. It is a buyer's and a chooser's market. Söderström and Uusitalo (2005) argue that the initial aim of the establishment of the free school market was to solve the problem of school and area segregation. However,

the opening of school markets and grade-based admission has gradually resulted in pupil allocation according to abilities and has escalated to segregated education by ability, socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Education earlier was considered to be a public good that should contribute to society but is now seen as a private good ruled by the preferences of individuals and parents (Bunar & Sernhede, 2013). Several studies show a relationship between the emergence of independent schools in Sweden and decreasing equity and increased social segregation within education systems (Östh, Andersson & Malmberg, 2013; Bunar, 2009; Vlachos, 2011; von Greiff, 2009). Furthermore, pupils with lower socio-economic and migrant backgrounds are overrepresented among students in need of special support (Berhanu, 2011; Dyson & Berhanu, 2012), including in Finland (see study 2). Considering the focus of this dissertation, it is important to recognise that in Sweden, these groups are less likely to exercise school choice (Bunar, 2010; Daun, 2003) (compare to study 4). The provision of segregated forms of special support has increased in the larger Swedish municipalities (Giota & Lundborg, 2007; Nilholm et al., 2007).

### 2.2.1 Finland

School choice has been present in Finland since the 1990s, and the inequalities produced by school choice have been studied to some extent (Bernelius, 2008; Koivisto, 2008; Kosunen, 2016; Metso, 2004; Rajander, 2010; Räty et al., 2009; Seppänen, 2003; 2006; Seppänen et al., 2015). In particular, Seppänen (2006) shows that mothers' educational levels are especially related to the choice of non-neighbourhood or local schools. Furthermore, parents choose local schools due to short journeys and the presence of friends and chose other schools due to preferred selective classes (Seppänen, 2006). These findings are similar to those reported in this dissertation.

Selective class use is recognised as an urban phenomenon (e.g. Seppänen et al., 2015), which varies by how open or closed the school choice space is (Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011; 2016). Kosunen (2016) defines the selective space of school choice as the governmental construction and practice of school choice, producing a field for competition for schools and families. In line with foreign studies, researchers have uncovered evidence, especially among the upper classes, of class-related strategies and the use of capitals in school choice in some Finnish municipalities (Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen et al., 2015a; Silvennoinen et al., 2015a). The middle classes make choices different than each other and other social classes (Kalalahti et al., 2015a; Rinne et al., 2015). So far, very little attention has been paid to the choices of the lower social classes (Silvennoinen et al., 2015b), and none to those parents whose children receive support. In this dissertation, class-related strategies

can be related to all parents regardless to the level of support their child needs (especially study 4).

Schools' reputations are often linked with areas' reputations (e.g. Bernelius, 2011). In the past, residential segregation in Finland divided wealthier cities from less wealthy, rural areas. Area segregation, though, has also emerged within cities, which are gradually starting to resemble other larger European cities where some parts are associated with wealth, and other parts with low socioeconomic status. Finnish cities are not residentially segregated to the same extent as elsewhere, but their development seems to trend in that direction. Nonetheless, educational equality should be considered in comparison to social equality and inequality as these directly affect unequal opportunities in educational paths (Antikainen & Rinne, 2012, 476). Studies have shown that neighbourhood segregation is closely related to desired and undesired neighbourhoods; thus, neighbourhood school allocation to wanted and unwanted schools—depending on municipalities' allocation policies—is linked to unemployment (Kortteinen & Tuomikoski, 1998), poverty (Uusitalo, 2000) and regional deprivation (Karvonen & Rintala, 2004; Vaattovaara, 1999; Vilkama et al., 2013) among individuals and neighbourhoods. Residential segregation is one of the most prominent reasons for differences in comprehensive education populations (Bernelius, 2010). As seen in this study, the optimisation (allocation of children individually to different catchment area schools by area principals) of children to schools within larger catchment areas could alleviate residential segregation at least on the level of theory.

According to a report from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (Jakku-Sihvonen & Kuusela, 2012), areas where the adult population has lower education levels are associated with immigrants, social welfare, joblessness, child welfare issues and lower-achieving schools. In contrast, areas associated with wealth tend to have high-achieving schools. In short, the level of achievement in a school population corresponds to the general education level of adult population in an area (Kauppinen, 2004). For instance, in the areas in Helsinki associated with high academic achievement, students tend to proceed to general upper-secondary school rather than vocational school (Karisto & Monten, 1996). Moreover, the education level of general population in an area influences students' academic achievement levels, although students' own backgrounds have more of an effect (Bernelius, 2011). As well, peers' attitudes tend to play a larger role in academic achievement in the upper grades of comprehensive education (grades 7–9), whereas in the lower grades of comprehensive education, parents' and children's family backgrounds have greater effect. Student allocation and school selection are directly linked to the residential area,

and the selected pupil population is linked to achievement level (Bernelius, 2011). The student population affects the desirability of the school for future students and parents. Some municipalities have attempted to address neighbourhood segregation through their comprehensive education politics and organisation, as examined in the study results and discussion.

Segregation not only within an area but also within schools is an important part of the school choice space discussion (Seppänen et al., 2015). Students are segregated into smaller units within schools: selective, general, and part-time and full- time special education classes. Some classes become more desired than others (see Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen et al., 2015). Bernelius (2013) studies the changing student population in Helsinki and identifies three influential factors: municipal allocation to catchment area schools, parental choice and moving near to desired schools. These three matters have been considered regarding the parents whose children receive support in this dissertation throughout the studies. These three factors increase the segregation of socially disadvantaged and ethnic minorities and the variance in academic outcomes of schools (see the example of Sweden). Also, a study finds that in a large city in Finland, children— usually those living in higher socioeconomic neighbourhoods— who select rare languages as an extracurricular activity early in their school paths often later attend selective classes (Kosunen, Seppänen & Bernelius, 2016). In addition, schools where two-thirds of the seventh graders applied to a school other than their assigned neighbourhood school have better academic outcomes (Bernelius, 2011). The parents whose children receive support consider these matters throughout the studies in this dissertation.

Another aspect of area segregation and school choice is that the original population diminishes in areas with larger number of migrants (Vilkama, 2011). The media has a role in stigmatising neighbourhoods, especially those with larger ethnic minority populations, as problematic (Haapajärvi & Junnilainen, 2013). One reason for moving neighbourhoods is that the original population does not want their children in the same schools as immigrant children and deems the neighbourhood to be not good enough for their children to grow up in (Vilkama, Vaattovaara & Dhalmann (2013). US studies call this phenomenon White flight (Sikkink & Emerson, 2008). UK studies also show that the choice of some schools and avoidance of others is linked to the demonisation of the ethnic other and the working classes, which middle-class parents tend to avoid (Reay, 2004). One, therefore, might ask: if a school had a large number of pupils with special education needs, would the same trends persist (see study 2)?

## 2.3 Special education and school choice

The process of choosing special education, general or selective education is influenced by the belief that one setting is better or more beneficial for children. This is by no means an easy question, and its answer depends on the personal views of the professionals, parents and municipal organisers, whose views are complicated accumulations of social class, previous personal experiences and cultural and historical backgrounds, as considered in the following.

Parents' social-class background can influence the level of services they can negotiate (Ong-Dean, 2009). Some US and Austrian studies considered below on parental school choices for children with special education needs show that the level of disability influences which type of classrooms parents want for their children. The greater children's need, the more parents believe their children will benefit from special education setting (also found in study 3). Parents believe that children are better attended by the staff in special classrooms (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer, Fuller, Arora & Nelson, 2001) as successful provision in special schools tends to be evaluated based on the personal and social aspects of support instead of academic results (Gasteiger-Klicpera, Klicpera, Gebhardt & Schwab, 2013; Parsons, Lewis, Davison, Ellins & Robertson, 2009), as also found in this dissertation (studies 1, 3 and 4). Inclusive education is seen positively for legal and philosophical matters and negatively due to concerns over possible isolation, instruction quality, teacher training and skills and teacher and parental support (Leyser & Kirk, 2004). Social stigma may influence parental school choice for children with support needs. Research provides evidence of children stigmatised in both regular- and special-education settings (Kaltiala-Heino, Poutanen & Välimäki, 2001). Vice versa, children with special education needs are not necessarily stigmatised or stereotyped in regular classrooms (Valanne, 2003; Hautamäki, Lahtinen, Moberg & Tuunainen, 1996)—but might be (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2002; Vaughn, Elbaum & Schum, 1996). The inconclusiveness of these results perhaps illustrates the complexity of school and classroom environments and demonstrates their potential for success or harm depending on the school and classroom organisation, school ethos, resources and teachers, among others.

Attending neighbourhood schools can help children form continuous relationships with peers in their own neighbourhoods, which can reduce anxiety during the transition from pre-school to first grade (see study 1). In a Finnish study, the parents with severely disabled children prefer a special-education setting, whereas the parents whose children have milder disabilities prefer that they be taught in the nearest school (Kivirauma et al., 2006). The study by Kivirauma et al. (2006) is used in this dissertation, especially when considering the findings from study 4.

Others' opinions might affect the school choices by the parents of children who need both more and less support. Parents talk to each other, and this grapevine influences the school choice space (Ball & Vincent, 1998). Middle-class parents tend to choose the same schools if they feel that it will enhance their children's schooling experience (van Zanten, 2009). Parents often want their children in classrooms with children from similar backgrounds. This phenomenon is called peer affect, as children are believed to be affected by the children around them, especially by the level of their peers' abilities (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992). A parental school happiness study finds that to parents, it is far more important with whom their children study than what they study (Coldron & Boulton, 1991). Furthermore, children's happiness, school location and attending the same school as siblings and friends are found to be of significance in this dissertation (studies 1 and 3).

In a US study on special education, Bagley and Woods (1998) find that parents' opinions are influenced by their friends whose children have similar learning difficulties as they find which schools meet specific needs varies. Parents feel unable to influence school choice and believe that accepting experts' opinion is their best option (Rydak, Downing, Morrison & Williams, 1996). Regarding special education, for example, general-education teachers' negative feelings towards inclusive practices can influence these choices. Furthermore, Finnish teachers mostly hold negative attitudes towards inclusion (Kuorelahti & Vehkakoski, 2009). General-education teachers have pessimistic views of their own ability to teach children in special education and think the workload is overwhelming. The feeling of being overwhelmed is linked to teachers who consider strictly following the general syllabus to be important. Positive attitudes towards inclusion increase with age among special-education teachers, whereas general-education teachers become more sceptical of inclusion with age. Furthermore, parents' attitudes towards inclusive education differ by education level and number of children. (Kuorelahti & Vehkakoski, 2009.) Another US study shows that children whose parents are college educated, have one or two children and are married express more positive attitude towards inclusion than parents who have a high-school education and four or more children (Stoiber, Gettinger & Goetz, 1998). Finally, parents report positive progress in, for example, social skills while their children with learning difficulties attend inclusive primary schools (Kenny et al., 2005). Parents feel that the older the children grow, the more their mainstream peers leave them behind, and the children have to form links with children with similar learning difficulties.

Usually, schooling decisions are made for the education of children who receive more support as by law, professionals are involved with schooling decisions. School

allocations for children with special education needs usually require meetings with various professionals from different fields, such as headmasters, classroom teachers, special education teachers and assistants from students' previous and new schools, as well as parents, doctors, therapists and psychologist. Professional conversations, actions and discourses (Vehkakoski, 2006) construct, close and open barriers to the educational possibilities of children with support needs. Professionals' opinions and decisions might make it difficult for parents to understand that they may apply to other schools. Those who understand and decide to use this choice are few (see study 4).

## 2.4    Parental school choice with reference to Bourdieu

Parental school choice theories are often linked to social classes and thereby to Bourdieu's work on the use of different types of capitals that enable access to certain fields. More opportunities for choice in schooling and working life can be explained in Bourdieusian terms as access to certain schools and classrooms and thus cultural capital. This guarantees a better ability to accumulate social capital, access networks in different fields and gradually gain economic capital, for example, through working life and symbolic power. The ability to access these fields requires access to capitals. The social world is a space of relations where agents' relative positions are determined by the capitals they possess (Bourdieu, 1985). We can argue that the comprehensive education leaders of municipalities have capitals, power and access to fields. Among pupils, social background (the capitals and the social class) affects educational attainment primarily and school choice secondarily (Boudon, 1974).

Symbolic power through education can be considered to be a selective mechanism. Initially, schooling seems to be a neutral mechanism, driven by the belief in the right people to assign students to the right places based on merit. Thus, there is a notion that some individuals' inability makes them undeserving (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Kivinen & Rinne, 1985; Rinne & Kivinen, 1984.) This selective schooling mechanism has been aided and decided greatly by government politics and lead to hierarchical positions through opening or closing opportunities in school paths (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1985; Rinne, 1987).

Going deeper into class theory, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that both educational advancement and exclusion are controlled by seemingly fair, meritocratic testing. The testing process in education systems demands cultural competence, a form of cultural capital that school systems themselves do not provide for the pupils. Furthermore, in this system of class order reproduction, it is not surprising that

mild disabilities and educational sub-normalities in society are mainly perceived among lower-class families (Carrier, 2012). The connection between social class and disability as the result of the social production has been established (Allen, 2004). This smooth, peaceful reproduction of educational and societal differentiation is justified, legitimated and unproblematised, as are the facts and values of medicine and educational psychology, within special education practices (Carrier, 2012, 38).

The accumulation of capitals, whether economic, social or cultural, serves to secure privilege, status and power over time (Bourdieu, 1986). In this study, class position is measured by the parents' highest education degree and work position, which are cultural capital but also linked to social capital and networking. Furthermore, class position is assessed by income, which is economic capital (studies 3 and 4).

Parental participation in school choices in both general and special education depends on the types of capital resources, particularly cultural and social, valued and used by families (Allen, 2004; Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Nind, 2008). Families demand effective teachers, address discipline disagreements and problematic treatment and receive special education services in ways that differ across socioeconomic backgrounds (Horvat et al., 2003). Teachers and school personnel also accept and reject types of cultural and social capital. Allen (2004) shows that middle-class parents of visually impaired children demand mobility aids, justified as a basic right to social space, whereas working-class parents are more likely to accept the lesser opportunities they were given. Furthermore, co-optation is an upper-class parental strategy using social capital to emphasise the importance of attending the same schools as friends or choosing schools with families from similar backgrounds (Van Zanten, 2009).

To conclude, social class theories have long explained how dominant social classes have gained their positions (Bernstein, 1971; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Parental school choices can be seen as contributing the construction of social class position and is related to parents' social class status (Ball, 2003; Van Zanten, 2005). The upper classes are known to have more extensive possibilities for choice in Finland as well (Bernelius, 2011; Kalalahti, Silvennoinen & Varjo, 2015b; Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen, 2006; Seppänen et al., 2015). More specifically, middle-class parents, including those with children with special needs, act within the education systems to make choices to benefit their children (Ball, 1993; Riddell et al., 1994; Van Zanten, 2005).

# 3. TYPES OF SUPPORT IN COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION: MOVING FROM A DUAL SYSTEM TO THREE CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT

## 3.1 History of special education in Finland

The history of disability and special education often carries the difficult burden of being written by administrators and professionals who intend to control it. It is rarely written by marginalised groups. In Finland, special education has its roots in the social welfare system in which disabilities were often linked to the lack of wealth. Furthermore, the Christian church established schools for the poor and unwell to educate, control and cure. The education of children with disabilities started at the end of 19th century, when institutions were established to teach the sensory impaired appropriate professions. (Kivirauma, 2008.) Before the Comprehensive School Act of 1968, separate special education classrooms were organised mostly in the cities (Kivirauma, 2015), with the aim to put away 'the naughty, disruptive and the unfit' considered by the current social norms and paradigms. Over time, it has been contended that special education has required categorisations of pupils, affecting their school life and path (Jahnukainen & Järvinen, 2008; Mietola, 2014; Niemi et al., 2010).

The organisation of special education as part of comprehensive schooling has its roots in the comprehensive education reorganisation under the Comprehensive School Act of 1968. The key effect of the act was to unify the parallel school system into one nine-year-long comprehensive education system with lower (grades 1–6) and upper levels (grades 7–9) enrolling pupils of the appropriate age. This unified system was thought to have some pedagogical problems as teaching heterogeneous pupil group together would be difficult. Consequently, part-time special education was introduced throughout the country, with the aim to reduce selective division in schools and aid in teaching heterogeneous groups. (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007.) Furthermore, until the 1980s, the Finnish education system used ability grouping. However, the same discussion on teaching heterogeneous groups continues now, fuelled by a heated discussion by the public and professionals on media platforms. The new curriculum of the 1960s reform was to be suited for all pupils; however, pupils with learning problems were taught with part-time special education measures (Kivirauma, 1989). To support the part-time special education system

as rising numbers entered the new field, special education teacher training was transformed into full-time special-education teacher training (Kivirauma, 1991).

The number of students in special education has risen along with the ranks of professionals in the field (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007; see also Jauhiainen & Kivirauma, 1997).

The number of pupils who have participated in part-time special education is a concrete indicator of the activities of teachers in this field. In principle, it can be said that the more students there are in part-time special education, the more students have received some individual pedagogical support. Naturally there are limits, but under good conditions the teacher/student ratio includes the optimal number of students. On the other hand, it can be said that more and more students have been labelled 'special education student' in comprehensive education. (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007, 290.)

It is important to note that using part-time special education practices to support pupils with learning difficulties may take more effort than teaching them in segregated institutions. As well, part-time special education produces labels as special education professionals are argued to benefit from organising special education as their professional position strengthens with the number of pupils moved to special education (Skrtic1991a, 1991b, 1995b, 1995c).

Although the 1960s reform transformed the parallel school system (*rinnakkaiskoulujärjestelmä*) to a unified comprehensive system, segregated institutions for pupils with special education needs remain within the comprehensive system. In this way, the system can be said to have been a dual system (*kaksoisjärjestelmä*) of special and regular education until the special education reform of 2010 (Basic Education Act 642/2010). Regular and special support were transformed into a more fluid, tiered three-level support system. Within this flexible system, municipalities organise education within the limits of law and curriculum.

Although the new support system is called Support for Learning and School Attendance in comprehensive education (Finnish National Board of Education 2015) (*Oppimisen ja koulunkäynnin tuki*) and has the goal of moving tiers and being fluid, the bureaucracies and practices maintain a hierarchy (from regular to intensified to special education and back). This is seen in practice as well as the three-tiered support system (*kolmiportainen tuki*). Following this logic, it can be argued that the education system has moved from the dual to the triple organisation of support. In practice, the education system has regular classrooms, part-time special education classrooms and special education

classrooms[2]. However, looking beyond special education to the whole comprehensive education system, another fourth layer of classroom is also present: the selective classroom. Furthermore, each municipality uses these classrooms in different ways; for example, some have no selective classes, and others offer different classes. The support system also varies by the area and municipality determining how many pupils receive support in which of the three categories (Statistics of Finland, 2015). Perhaps the best description of this system as a whole is that it is segmented, as Seppänen et al. (2015) call it. Although their (Seppänen et al.) initial considerations of segmented comprehensive-school systems do not focus on special education as such, I argue that the overall system is not dual but rather complex and segmented. In this dissertation, the link of the organisation of special education to the history of the local space can be seen in the brief interviews with the directors of municipality comprehensive education. Furthermore, the complexity of the system and the shift from a dual to a complex system can also be traced in this dissertation.

## 3.2    Current situation in special education

Inclusion has its roots in the US 1960s civil rights movements, with the aim to guarantee equality for all. In education, matters of inclusion and exclusion were contemplated, especially the segregated environments of special education. (Winzer, 1993.) Inclusive education evolvement emerged from integration and the normalisation[3] principle. The historical development of the Finnish special education context has placed a strong emphasis on the medicalisation of disability. Problems are seen in the pathologies of individuals who need to be helped rather than in the environment and societal structures that do not fit the needs of individuals. Since its founding in the 1970s, Finnish comprehensive schooling has followed the normalisation principle to assign and teach pupils receiving support in their own comprehensive education classrooms. (Kivirauma, 1999.) In the global context, inclusive schooling and the inclusive classroom first emerged in the 1980s (Allan & Slee, 2008).

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[2]   Support for pupils is often given in two types of classrooms: part-time special education classrooms (*osa-aikainen/laaja-alainen erityisopetus*) and full-time special education classrooms (*luokkamuotoinen erityisopetus*). Full-time special education classrooms may vary in their purpose. For example, centralised special education classrooms in municipalities (*kaupunkitasoinen pienluokka*) might serve pupils with severe disabilities and specific needs, whereas special education classroom used locally within catchment areas (*alueellinen pienluokka*) may serve pupils with less severe needs and employ varying learning and teaching practices, such as shared teaching practices (*yhteisopettajuus*). (Lahtinen, 2009.)

[3]   The normalisation principle means to accept disabilities and provide the same conditions and services as to those without disabilities and to make the conditions and norms of everyday life similar to those for people without disabilities. Normalisation has been linked to development of services for those with disabilities that stress community integration (see Nirje, 1970; Wolfenberger, 1972).

A recent shift towards more inclusive politics has had a great impact on the Finnish education system. The shift has happened slowly after Finland signed the inclusive Salamanca agreement (UNESCO, 1994), pledging to re-organise the school environment rather than focus on individuals so that schools can accommodate children with different backgrounds. In general, inclusion can be considered to be the right to be part of, included and involved (Ainscow, 2006; Niemi, 2008; Wilson, 2002) in all parts of society (Slee, 2014). Inclusion can be related to work on participation, especially in the field of youth studies (Nivala & Ryynänen, 2013). Pedagogical arrangements can include or exclude pupils (e.g. Jahnukainen, 2001); inclusive pedagogical arrangements encourage and support participation in learning and the school environment and culture and actively reject exclusion (Niemi, 2015). 'Inclusive practice is about the things that staff in schools does which give meaning to the concept of inclusion' (Florian, 2008, 205). Who is taught is as important as what is taught. Although the ideas and practices of including pupils with disabilities is a fundamental right and in keeping with spirit of equality, it still leaves much room for interpretation due to the vagueness of the term, which has been seen as problematic throughout its existence (see e.g. Lindsay, 2007). In the political sphere, especially the current market-oriented era of individualism and the idealisation of excellence (Skrtic, 1991a; Simola, 2001; e.g. Lundahl, 2017), inclusion may require active citizenship and sufficient ability to participate (see e.g. Kauppila, Kinnari & Niemi, forthcoming; Vehkakoski, 2006).

The Strategy for Special Education policy document concludes that pupils with special education needs are to be taught in neighbourhood schools, whenever possible (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2007). This strong neighbourhood school allocation principle is expressed throughout parents' opinions in this study (see studies 1, 3 and 4). The development of special education allocation practices (Kivirauma, 1999) and laws can be generally described as moving towards inclusive practices (Naukkarinen, 2005; Niemi et al., 2010; Mietola, 2014; Mietola & Niemi, 2014). The Strategy for Special Education policy particularly appealed towards teacher's professional pride with a notion of Finland being able to educate all of its children as stated in international declarations towards inclusive practices (Ahtiainen, 2017). However, in this dissertation, it can also be said the organisation of support is polarised; in some municipalities, of comprehensive education is more segregated in some, more market oriented in others and more inclusive in yet more.

A recent study on municipal support measures also confirms that municipalities differ in their ways of organising support (Lintuvuori, Jahnukainen & Hautamäki, 2017). The researchers argue that these differences are not negative in themselves;

however, pupils' legal protections need to remain consistent. The study confirms the vast differences in the ways that municipalities organise support practices for children with support needs, especially through extended comprehensive education decisions, which are most common in eastern Finland. The most children were documented to receive intensified support are in the capital region, where had the highest 2015 PISA scores. There are no statistically significant differences in the provision of support practices, including intensified and special education support, between the eastern or the western Finnish municipalities which did not have as high PISA scores. (Lintuvuori et al., 2017.)

Inclusion is often studied and politically assessed statistically by increases or decreases in student allocation to special education, part-time or full-time regular education and transfer decisions, which do not guarantee inclusivity (Mietola & Niemi, 2014). Although also not a guarantee of inclusivity, this current study considers inclusion and exclusion based on allocation, whether pupils with support needs have access to all types of education and, if they do, how able they are to access these services. While access can be considered to be a first step towards inclusion, it is important to more deeply study this issue through more in-depth interviews to understand the inclusivity of practice. Overall, special education is often seen as positive discrimination to ensure an equal right to obtain individual support and guidance (Niemi, 2014; Puro, Sume & Vehkakoski, 2011; Slee, 1997). However, it can also function as a structural segregation mechanism within the education system (Jauhiainen & Kivirauma, 1997; Niemi, 2014; Skrtic, 1991; Teittinen, 2008) that pigeonholes students into us and them (Bauman, 1997).

### 3.3    Statistics on special education

Since the 1990s, the number of pupils receiving special education has increased in many countries around the world (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2010; Powell, 2011), but Finland leads globally in special education given to comprehensive education students (Armstrong, 1999; Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Vislie, 2003). Although this was before the 2010 reform, the number of pupils receiving both special and intensified support is still high. The statistics concerning pupils in different educational settings in the Finnish context are highly interesting. The number of pupils put into special education substantially increased from 2000 to 2010. In that time, the number of pupils considered to have special education needs nearly doubled, generating widespread public and academic discussion of the explanation (Mietola & Niemi, 2014). Researchers have speculated about multiple reasons; some argue that it is due to a more efficient support system which reaches more pupils (Kirjavainen et

al., 2014), while in contrast, others attribute it to the diminishing scope of normality (Kivirauma et al., 2006) (affected by the neoliberal excellence discourse; Skrtic, 1991a), the financial system supporting special education (Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen, 2015) and constant changes to the statistical coding or categorisation of pupils.

Thus, in the planning for the 2011 reform of Finnish educational legislation (Basic Education Act 642/2010), one objective was to end the growth in special education decisions (Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen, 2015). The reform was designed to enable the flexible organisation of educational support so that in everyday school life, all pupils would be entitled to three categories of support: general, intensified and special (Basic Education Act 642/2010). Another aim was to distance pedagogical decisions from diagnostic reports as the earlier structure of only two support categories (special and regular) had maintained this dependence. However, this new system, too, introduces more bureaucracy as it has one more supportive layer (intensified support) requiring decisions. (Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen, 2015.) The change to the three categories of support has been expected to influence education system towards more inclusive, with a decreasing number of pupils in special education, as well as diminish the rising costs of special education funding (Jahnukainen & Itkonen, 2015).

Since the 2010 reform when allocations to special education were the highest (more than 8% of pupils were assigned to receive special support), it has remained constant at 7, 3%. In 2014, 15% of all comprehensive education pupils received either special support or intensified support (equal amount). Over the past three years, the number of pupils with intensified support has increased slowly, while the number of pupils receiving special support has remained constant. In 2015, nearly 16% of pupils received support, the proportion of students in special education stabilised at 7, 3% from the previous year, and the number of pupils in intensified support slowly rose. Male students were overrepresented, making up more than 70% of the students in special education. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2015.)

Those pupils with intensified support mostly receive it in part-time special education (75%). Furthermore, 56% receive remedial teaching, and 39% have assistants. Among pupils with special education needs, 37% receive part-time support in regular education, 34% receive remedial teaching, and 56% have assistants. Of those pupils who receive special education, 40% attend special education classrooms full time, and 19% receive full-time services in regular education (more details in Table 1). In addition, of those pupils who receive special education support, 27% have extended comprehensive education decisions. Furthermore, 49% follow the general education syllabuses in all subjects, while the rest have individualised syllabuses in one or more subjects. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2015.)

**Table 1.** Comprehensive school pupils having received special support by place of provision of teaching, 2016 (Official Statistics of Finland, 2016a)

| Place of provision of teaching | Pre-primary education | Grades 1–6 | Grades 7–9 | Additional education | Total | Total, % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaching fully in a general education group | 262 | 5 087 | 2 729 | 7 | 8 085 | 20 |
| Over 50% of teaching in a general education group | 61 | 3 583 | 4 184 | 3 | 7 831 | 19 |
| Under 50% of teaching in a general education group | 93 | 5512 | 3952 | 2 | 9559 | 23 |
| Teaching fully in a special group, other than special school | 435 | 7 608 | 3 404 | 32 | 11 623 | 28 |
| Teaching fully in a special group, special school | 158 | 2 339 | 1 829 | 68 | 3 939 | 10 |
| Total | 958 | 23 948 | 16 027 | 104 | 41 037 | 100 |

In a comparison across three years apart, the statistics stay nearly the same. Interestingly, the number of pupils receiving special education support in special education classrooms decreased by 3 percentage points from 41% (13% in special education institutions) in 2012 to 38% in 2016 (Lintuvuori, 2015; Official Statistics of Finland, 2016b) (Table 2). However, 41% received part-time special education in 2012 (Lintuvuori, 2015), and 42% in 2016. From 2012 to 2015, the proportion of pupils receiving education in regular support increased from 19% to 20%.

**Table 2.** Pupils receiving support in comprehensive education by type of support and classroom during 2016. (Table has been made based on information from Official Statistics of Finland, 2016b)

| Type of classroom | Regular support | Intensified support | Special support | 2016 (all pupils) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regular classroom | * | * | 20% | |
| Part-time special education | * | 75% | 42% | 22% (122 200) |
| Full-time special education | * | * | 38% | |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Comprehensive education | 83,5% | 9% | 7,5% | 100% (N=550 236) |

* No statistical information was gathered.

Another important aspect of special education organisation and practices is the allocation of economic resources across municipalities based on the socioeconomic background of residents, number of immigrants and unemployment rate in municipalities. The Finnish Ministry of Education funds approximately 25% of municipal education, while municipalities supply the rest themselves (Ministry of

Education and Culture, 2016). This arrangement reflects municipal autonomy. In addition, the government funds specific areas of comprehensive education, with the funding for each education provider determined separately depending on the number of pupils. These specific funding areas include, for example, pupils with international backgrounds who need more intense language teaching, the schooling of pupils with extended comprehensive education decisions and flexible education, a class organised in the last grades of comprehensive education for pupils considered to be at risk of dropping out (*joustavan opetuksen rahoitus*). (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016.) Government education spending accounts for 6% of the national GPD and has decreased since 2010, when per-pupil expenditures peaked (Official Statistics of Finland, 2015).

Municipal funding plays a significant role in the schooling of pupils assigned to special education (Kirjavainen, Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen, 2014). Municipalities with higher residence taxes and higher government funding also had higher numbers of special education students. During their investigation from 2001 to 2010, the number of special education pupils increased, along with differences between municipalities: many schools offering special education on a decentralised basis also had more pupils, especially those with mild learning difficulties, receiving special education. The researchers speculate that the more schools offer special education, the easier it is to react to students' needs and refer them to special education, without having to consider monetary costs of school lifts. Furthermore, areas with more pupils in special education had lower socioeconomic status. Municipalities with more resources had impact, especially in the allocation of more children with mild learning difficulties to special education. Municipality resources did not impact the allocation of pupils with severe difficulties. Kirjavainen et al. (2014) conclude that municipality resources, comprehensive education, the operating environment and special education organisation influence the number of pupils in special education. (Kirjavainen, Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen 2014.)

# 4.   CRITICAL PRAGMATISM AND SKRTIC: SCHOOL BUREAUCRACIES AND ADHOCRACIES

The work of critical pragmatist Thomas Skrtic has not commonly been used as a framework to study special education and school choice, except for Icelandic researcher Gunnlaugur Magnusson's (2015) dissertation applying Skrtic's theory to analyse Swedish school choice and independent schools with an emphasis on the origin of special education. This dissertation partly follows these footsteps. Furthermore, Skrtic's work is considered to be a complete, theoretical account focusing on inclusive schools and organisations (Dyson & Millward, 2000).

Skrtic's theories reflect the North American special education system and the special education system during the 1980s and 1990s and provide insight into the organisational changes, paradigm shifts and deep consideration of the function of special education and its mechanisms. Hence, Skrtic´s theories offer an apparatus for a comparative analysis to determine the stage of the Finnish education system in the organisation of special education. Globalised, neoliberal and market-oriented ideologies affected the US, French and British education systems long before, for instance, Sweden and Finland. As explained in chapter 2, market mechanisms have had great impact on the education system in opening up school choice. Here lies the beginning of a competitive, client-driven education system, in which special education and its pupils need to be considered. The Finnish special education system (Valtiontalouden Tarkastusviraston Tarkastuskertomus, 2013), as in other countries (McCall & Skrtic, 2009), has an unexplained overrepresentation of pupils from different social groups. Through Skrtic's terminology, conceptualisations and reconstruction of special education, I argue that the Finnish special education system can be seen to have parts of two both the criticised segregated special education system and the utopia of adhocracy (see below). Meaning, that to some extend segregated special education is used with segregated special education classrooms and schools, as well as special educational teachers strong hold on the bureaucracies of special education. Moreover, there are also resemblances to the adhocracy, as professionals, parents and the children form working groups, which fluidly consider how to proceed with support needs. Furthermore, the adhocracies can be seen in those municipalities which form classrooms of children from all support categories, considering how children could work best together, without cutting out resources.

This dissertation has a two-fold approach: it draws on school choice studies concerning the socioeconomic backgrounds and the allocation of pupils with different support needs but also considers the local policy organisation of special

education in different municipalities. These intertwined questions are both relevant to municipalities, what they offer pupils with special needs and how they treat these students in comparison to their peers. Decisions concerning pupils with special education needs are linked not only to the local organisation of special education but also to bureaucracy, professionals (eg. teachers, special education teachers, psychologists etc.) and parents. To understand the bureaucratic and professional influences on the organisation of special education, I use some conceptual tools from Skrtic, a critical pragmatist. His work is especially relevant as these tools introduce different discourses and competing rationales or paradigms between and within general education and special education policy and practice. This dissertation places a strong emphasis on the organisational changes, particularly (parental and municipal) school choices, ongoing in the general education and special education systems. I refer to Skrtic's work when considering various paradigm shifts in this dissertation. Furthermore, in Skrtic's work and this dissertation, two bureaucracies are present: first, the machine bureaucracy concerns policy and legislation, and second, the professional bureaucracy considers practices (see below). Skrtic (1995a) contends that special education is an artefact of general education and that adhocracy should be a model for special education organisation. Adhocracy as an ideal type of schooling is discussed later in this chapter (4.4.3. Adhocracy), along with these other concepts.

Pragmatism, from which critical pragmatism emerges, is a philosophy developed in the 19th century, mostly by mainly Northern American philosophers, of whom the most well known in education is John Dewey (1911, 1917). Pragmatist educational philosophy relies on the relationship between theory translating fluidly to practice; educational practice valuing community, democracy and problem-based learning. Generally, Pragmatism values knowledge and conceptions rather than the search for reality (Dewey, 1911). It holds that humans construct our knowledge and that human perspectives, beliefs and power relations form reality (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). Understanding and communicating mere truth, or what is seen, is never neutral but always conveys values; therefore, science and knowledge have perspectives and are political (Bernstein, 1983). Within this framework, key concepts in this dissertation, such as inclusion, market orientation, neoliberalism, equity, choice and other central terms, are pondered and opened. Aligning with the pragmatist perspective, this dissertation uses multiple methodologies, as different methodologies allow considering of the issues from different angles to see different perspectives (Rorty, 1982).

Even though there are no distinct borders between pragmatism and critical pragmatism, and though critical pragmatists share with pragmatists presuppositions of human nature and social processes, that critical pragmatists put emphasis on the

emancipatory, polemical, and transformative potential of pragmatist philosophy, social theory and research, furthermore, even an activist role of the citizen-scholar (Given, 2008). Critical pragmatism accepts that there exist clear and implicit rules, standards and discourses (Cherryholmes, 1988), but their mere existence does not make them problematic. What can make them problematic is how these rules, standards and discourses are implemented. Hence, the construction of reality by action, discourse, knowledge and science draws from post-structural theoretical developments (Cherryholmes, 1988). Meaning is not only made by social and cultural structures, but also in the interpretations of the meaning, meaning being subjective depending on their interpreter. For example laws in themselves, merely are, but it is the way they are implemented to practice affects people, as well as, the made meaning of the effect on people is subjective.

Similarly, school choice studies and the notion of school choice space of school organisation is constructed through local history and culture. The critical pragmatist view also accepts that knowledge and traditions shape educational organisations. Considering special education, Magnusson (2015) adds that knowledge claims and traditions form special education practices. In order to understand these culturally and socially shaped practices of special education, Skrtic (1991a, 1992b) uses ideal types (see Weber, 1949) and utopias as an analytical tool to compare these cultural and social phenomena from different perspectives. Hence, it is easier to make a comparison to the existing organization of education system and open its differences to describe another system. (Magnusson 2015.)

## 4.1 Professions as paradigms

Skrtic (1991a, 1991b) reasons that professionalism is contextualised in theoretical paradigms and assumptions historically positioned in a professional culture consisting of a profession's knowledge, traditions, theories, practices and discourses. Skrtic (1991a) argues that the professions depend on theoretical paradigms to make meaning in a complex world. There is no value neutrality, so to speak; often although not voiced, professionals' choices are often value driven. It can be added that no actors, including parents, are value neutral. This notion of value-driven reality can be linked with Bourdieu's (1985) view of the source of people's values in their habitus and capitals: in particular, cultural capital, or the kind of knowledge people have, and social capital, or their social networks and family backgrounds and histories. The courage to move through fields swiftly comes from the accumulation of capitals.

According to Cherryholmes (1988), it is not coincidence that people tend to choose activities in line with the rules and narratives of practices, although they

could choose differently. The professional discourse can be seen by the fact that when professionals make decisions they tend to make decisions that follow certain logic which also tend to be in line with what the profession would prefer. Paradigms, therefore, do not come from nowhere but from crises, which prompt professionals to question organisations, practice, knowledge and traditions; question a certain logic (Cherryholmes, 1988). These crisis and then paradigm shifts can also happen on an organisational level as organisations are social actors with considerable power (Skrtic, 1991a). An example of such a crisis in the Finnish context is the continuous rise of special education pupils until 2010 (Official Statistics of Finland, 2016b), when the government changed legislation in reaction to the crisis and adopted the three-tiered support system. Another example of a crisis is that when Finland's PISA scores dropped recently (OECD, 2015), the government responded by, for example, segregating and pigeonholing students to create tracks to excellence and achieve PISA greatness again. Here, the shift to excellence can be considered to be a paradigm shift, as can the inclusive law measures. According to Skrtic (1991a), education is desired by society but acts as a kind of schooling device, shaped and moulded by its organisational mechanisms. Education, therefore, is influenced by its organising actors and produces certain outcomes that affect society. However, the educational organisation itself is not easy to shift due to its peculiarity of two levels of bureaucracies: the machine and the professional.

## 4.2    Bureaucracies

School organisations are driven by two interrelated bureaucracies: the machine bureaucracy and the professional bureaucracy (Skrtic, 1991a, 1991b). The machine bureaucracy considers the performance of routine tasks and separates workers by standardising and formalising rules. In education, public assumptions about schools' role and outcomes affect the rules and legislation which govern educational machines, or schools. When schools fail to fulfil these public assumptions about, for instance, efficiency and equality, new reforms are implemented to address the shortcoming. Through the process of standardisation and formalisation, the machine (the school) is assumed to be fixed and to function in the desired manner (Skrtic, 1991a, 1991b; see also Magnusson, 2015). In the Finnish case, the machine bureaucracy is the laws, rules and procedures constructed by the government that take away some parents' ability to have an equal voice in their children's schooling. Thus, the official decisions, or the structural mechanism, in the education system polarises children's schooling paths. Official decisions, such as diagnosis-based special education decisions, and

mechanisms, such as polarised education paths, are discussed later in this dissertation. On the other hand, the choice reforms can be seen as additions to the machine that are intended to allow parents to have input, as machine bureaucracies is a manner of making the organisation of schooling effective.

The professional bureaucracy regards the work within schools. It is driven by rational and functional assumptions of technical efficiency and standardisation to succeed in complex tasks. These tasks are more ambiguous, driven by personal thoughts fuelled by theories and practices. At best, professionals use theory and knowledge to adapt or invent practices to fit clients. The standardisation procedures aimed at achieving efficiency, though, overlook the relationship between theory and practice. Consequently, professional bureaucracies pigeonhole clients and set categories without innovatively meeting clients' specific needs. (Skrtic, 1991a, 1991b; see also Magnusson, 2015.) Furthermore, the professionals in education organisations are often loosely coupled, working in isolation. Loosely coupled systems are harder to adjust by external reforms as adherence to reforms depends on individual professionals rather than the system. As opposed to tightly-coupled groups working efficiently (see below in section 4.3. Adhocracy). The professional and the machine bureaucracy can work separately so that education professionals have strong power within their classrooms. However, to an extent, professionals are forced to serve the standardised rules rather than students. The tighter the standardisation and formalisation of rules are, the more professionals' own thinking is devalued (Skrtic, 1995a). In the Finnish education system, these loosely coupled teachers who have great autonomy produce curriculum in their own practice (Simola, 1995).

According to Skrtic (1991a), special education is an artefact of regular education; therefore, its professionals, practices and philosophies reflect regular education. Making special education merely a part of regular education leads to the assumption that society's education system provides for all pupils. However, in reality, it offers two rails as the demands of society are presumed to be fundamental while reforms add loosely coupled programmers and specialists without affecting fundamental changes (Magnusson, 2015). Skrtic (1995a) argues that special education is an institutional practice adjusted in an attempt to fit regular or public education, while bureaucratic reforms are implemented by professional bureaucracies to achieve society's objectives. According to Skrtic (1995a), traditional special education is defined by four assumptions that should be criticised:

1)     Students' disabilities (which cause school problems) are pathological conditions.

2)     Differential diagnosis is objective and useful.

3) Special education is a rationally conceived and coordinated system of services that benefits diagnosed students.

4) Progress in special education is a rational–technical process of incremental improvement in conventional diagnostic and instructional practices. (Skrtic, 1995a, 211.)

The Finnish system can be seen to align with traditional special education, not according to law but as the families' report that they search for diagnoses to obtain resources for needed support. Parents feel that diagnoses obtain help, and professionals that they aid in understanding (see study 1). Consequently, parents might want service diagnoses to help them secure needed support and funding (Teittinen, 2008). Skrtic criticises these assumptions based on scientific knowledge and theory on special education as this subjective foundation of practice can be questioned (Magnusson, 2015). Special education practice has produced more special education pupils over time (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007). Instead of special education, Skrtic proposes adhocracy (1991b, 1995d).

## 4.3 Adhocracy

Skrtic suggests emancipatory-driven adhocracy as an alternative to special education. Adhocracy is the inverse of bureaucracy; schools strive to meet the needs of different types of clients and apply new ideas to practice rather than categorisation and standard practices as categories only make lines that allow some pupils to pass and others to fail. In an adhocracy, organisations are created through innovative problem-solving. Different professionals work together closely, forming various, tightly-knitted constellations to solve different issues. This environment gives professionals more power and autonomy from external regulations, creating a more inclusive democratic environment, shifting from equity to excellence. (Skrtic, 1991b; 1995d.) It is to be added that, although Sktric´s adhocracy offers a way of organizing education in an inclusive manner, it is by no means the only way to organize it.

According to Skrtic, during the 1980s and 1990s, the equity discourse in US education shifted to excellence, creating a fabricated dichotomy as equity should go with excellence. Here, we return to Finnish researchers Janne Varjo and Mira Kalalahti (2011), who argue that the equity discourse has reached the Finnish education system, but communal equity has given way to individual equity. The school restructuring movement coincided with the inclusive movement calling for an individualised system for pupils but did not question special education. According to Skrtic, the

inclusive movement derived from the integrative model, which challenged both the professional and the machine bureaucracy and proposed that occupational groups should solve problems with the client in mind. (Skrtic, 1995d; see also Magnusson, 2015.) The Finnish system potentially embraces the inclusive education system in at least some municipalities, as seen in this study.

The Finnish education system as a whole is considered to grant autonomy to teachers, who are master's degree-trained professionals who can plan and organise their teaching based on the curriculum guidelines. Special education teachers are highly trained to work with professionals in other occupations, forming tight communities and support groups for pupils, some working in an inclusive manner to change the environment where the individuals work. As how municipalities organise education or general education and special education differs greatly, producing a polarised education system (as seen throughout this dissertation). The threat is that neoliberalism will overtake inclusion due to this individualism in both movements, with the differences of consumers and belief in the ability to choose (Selvaraj, 2005). Clearly, some municipalities are on the way to polarised school paths (see e.g. study 2).

## 4.4    Criticism of Skrtic's work

Scholars have raised a number of criticisms of Skrtic's notion of adhocratic schools. Dyson and Millward (2000) describe oft-voiced criticisms of Skrtic's work and argue that it reflects a US perspective from the 1990s, when the democracy of society was at question. This question links to how schools are organised in relation of disadvantage; thus, the school organisation becomes part of a broader view of the democratic basis of society. This broader view, in turn, can be linked to concerns about education across the globe. However, how do the details of the US perspective translate to the Finnish context? For example, when Skrtic discusses bureaucracies in schools, how can we understand Finnish bureaucracies in relation to US bureaucracies from the 1990s?

Dyson and Millward (2000) argue that Skrtic's arguments are philosophical rather than empirical, grounded in the theory of knowledge rather than research on schools. According to Dyson and Millward (2000), Skrtic theoretically argues the advantages of the adhocratic school and the ability of its bureaucracy to save democratic society, but he lacks empirical evidence on schools and details of practices. Dyson and Millward (2000) also question if, according to Skrtic, bureaucracies are persevered by professional cultures and pigeonholing practices. More specifically, Dyson and Millward (2000) ask how according to Skrtic, have some schools and

practices become adhocracies? What events or groups reveal sufficient anomalies in the current bureaucratic paradigm to cause action? Dyson and Millward (2000) also question Skrtic's lack of references to economics, politics and power beyond bureaucracy. Magnusson (2015) adds to Dyson and Millward's (2000) critique that Skrtic fails to relate schools back to society as schools are not a separate entity. Pupils come from all backgrounds, social classes, genders, ethnicities and disabilities, and the intersections of these differences affect the ways pupils allocate in schools and later in society.

In conclusion, it can be argued that these criticisms of Skrtic's work point to many unanswered questions about the practicalities of school organisation and the relation of school to society. In this study, Skrtic's theory is used as it offers a great reflexive tool to consider the state of inclusive comprehensive education in different municipalities.

# 5.  RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The aim of the study is to consider parental school choices for children who receive support and municipalities' organisation of comprehensive education. This chapter discusses the methodological considerations in the studies presented in this dissertation, particularly the choices made concerning the research method, data collection procedures, data analysis methods and ethical considerations. The research in this dissertation is conducted using a mixed methodology, and the articles consist of independent studies. The first study relies on interviews with parents, teachers and assistants, the second article uses a pupil registry as data and investigates student allocation to schools and classrooms, and the third and fourth articles are based on a data set from parental survey on school choice (Table 3). In addition to these studies and published or submitted articles, interviews with municipal leaders and searches of municipal websites provide data on the organisation of comprehensive education (section 7.1). These investigations are next explained in more detail.

The research questions are as follows:

1.  How do municipalities organise comprehensive education, specifically pupil allocation and school attendance for pupils with support needs?

2.  What school choices for children do parents have in municipalities? Are parents aware of their possible choices? What type of parents exercise choice? How do they use it and on what basis?

3.  Who makes choices for children with support needs, and how do they do so?

**Table 3.** Articles in this dissertation.

| Article | Authors | Publication status | Participants | Methods of data collection and analysis | Research questions |
|---------|---------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.Towards inclusive schooling policies in Finland: a multiple-case study from policy to practice | S. Lempinen | *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 2016 | Parents, teachers and assistants of three children with ADHD (age: 6–8 years) | Semi-structured interviews and content analysis | 1 and 3 |
| 2. The contrast of inclusion and school choice policies in Finland | S. Lempinen, A-K. Berisha and P. Seppänen | *Kasvatus*, 2016 | Register data on 13 year olds in the Finnish city Turku (2013) | Quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics and cross-tabs | 1 |
| 3. Special support and neighbourhood school allocation in Finland: A study on parental school choice | S. Lempinen and A-M. Niemi | *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 2017 | Parents (208) of first and seventh graders receiving support primarily in four municipalities | Questionnaire, descriptive statistics, cross-tabs, open-ended questions and content analysis | 2 and 3 |
| 4. Special support and school choice in Finland: who should decide where my child is schooled? | S. Lempinen | Submitted | Parents (208) of first and seventh graders receiving support primarily in four municipalities | Questionnaire, descriptive statistics, cross-tabs, open-ended questions and content analysis | 2 and 3 |

## 5.1   Rationale for the method

This research focuses on the views on school choice and neighbourhood school held by parents whose children receive support in six municipalities. This overall dissertation is an intersectional study as it investigates the intersection of school choice in relation to social class, to those parents whose children receive support and to the municipal organisation of education. A research aim is to understand the relation of parental understanding of school choices and the organisation of education in various municipalities. The intersectional nature of this study gives rise to two

methodological approaches. This twofold investigation of parental school choice from varied perspectives can be called theory triangulation (Denzin, 2006) as the parents are considered through their views of school choice and then the broader perspectives of the organisation of the comprehensive education system and the opening and closing of choices in municipalities. The parental actions and understandings of school choice are based on school choice studies, which often have a strong link to Bourdieu's work on field, habitus and capitals. The parental opinions then are seen as loosely linked with capitals through use of social classes in this study. The participants are seen to act and be positioned in relation to social class. Hence, this study links to relationalism (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, the other focus of this research is supportive measures and their organisation by law, municipality bureaucracies and actors influencing the moment and time. Hence, in a pragmatist way, this research gives a snapshot of the influences of these different settings (Mangnusson, 2015; Sapsford, 2007). Furthermore, throughout the study, I view inclusive education not as a separate entity but as part of the overall comprehensive education system, with an emphasis on how in Skrtic's terms special education is an artefact of education.

The methods used in this study are chosen based on the desire to understand patterns in parental understanding and opinions on school choice and supportive measures. Hence, I use questionnaire and registry data are used to deepen understanding of the topic, qualitative interviews with participants are conducted, and open-ended questions are included in the questionnaire.

## 5.2 Data collection

### 5.2.1 Selection of cities for the study

Data are gathered from several cities to describe and compare the detailed local contexts and conditions. As known from previous studies (Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen, 2006), different positions within local contexts place schools and families in a space of competition. Furthermore, parental choice is constructed through history and in politics and social spheres that produce inequality. Despite studies on school choice in larger urban Finnish areas, not much is known about smaller cities or rural areas.

The reason for selecting mainly small and large southern cities for this research derives from two considerations about urban ideologies and distances. First, school choice is largely considered to be a phenomenon in urban Finland, where selective ideologies are most common (Kosunen, 2016; Räty, 2013), and it can be argued that southern Finland is more urban. Second, northern Finland is scarcely populated, and distances to schools in catchment areas can be vast, allowing for less choice than

in urban areas. This research includes one northern municipality; however, it was not deliberately chosen by the researcher, but came into the research by chance as a family in study moved there, as described later. In sum, the schools offering different types of curricular activities and specialised classes can vary greatly depending on the municipality size, geographical size, population type, the municipality's monetary resources and the arrangement of the school bureaucracy and culture. However, even small municipalities may use choice strategies even if the options are limited (as seen in this research).

Finland has many local education authorities, which are the decision-making bodies on education in the cities under their jurisdiction. Finnish municipalities have significant power and can decide, for instance, education, health and social services budgets, create curriculums fit for local schools and conduct self-evaluations. Municipalities also decide whether principals have managerial power or are more pedagogical leaders. Principals, along with teachers, decide how laws, curriculum, teaching methods, special education and continuing education are applied in their schools (Juusenaho, 2004). This situation explains the great differences across municipalities, cities and schools in Finland.

The first section of the results chapter (6.1) describes the studied municipalities' solutions to organising comprehensive education based on reviews of municipal websites and short interviews with the municipal leaders of comprehensive education. Approximately 20-minute phone interviews with six municipal leaders inquired how education is organised, who makes school allocation decisions and how monetary resources are allocated to support practices. These leaders of comprehensive education in the municipalities were contacted by email to inform them about the dissertation and that the final stage would gather recent information about municipalities' organisation of comprehensive education to supplement the data from the municipal websites (see the results chapter). These interviews with the municipal leaders of comprehensive education are thematic, covering the themes of the organisation of comprehensive education in municipalities, who makes decisions about children's schooling, how children who need support are assigned and how are resources allocated. After describing the municipalities where the families live, the methodological considerations of each article are reflected on.

### 5.2.2 Municipalities

Table 4 shows which municipalities are connected to which study. The results section includes a more elaborate table (Table 7.) with basic information about the municipalities and their organisation of comprehensive education.

**Table 4.** Municipalities in the studies.

| Municipality | Article | Location | Interviews with municipality comprehensive education leaders |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1, 3 and 4 | East | Yes |
| B | 1, 3 and 4 | South | Yes |
| C | 1 | North | Yes |
| D | 2 | West | Yes |
| E | 3 and 4 | East | Yes |
| F | 3 and 4 | West | Yes |

*Municipalities in study 1*

The director of comprehensive education in municipality A granted permission to conduct the study in 2012 (Appendix 5.). The study aim was to consider the paths of the three children with similar backgrounds from kindergarten to first or second grade. Municipality (A) and the target group were chosen as the researcher had been these children's kindergarten teacher a few years earlier. Four parents whose children were in the first or second grade and had an ADHD diagnosis were contacted. Three families agreed to participate. The other municipalities (B and C) were included in this study as the researcher followed the schooling paths of the three children. It so happened that all three families moved to Finnish municipalities different in size, location and culture in Finland. The two families who moved to other cities had lived there for approximately six months. All the teachers and assistant interviewed were from the same city.

*Municipality in study 2*

The comprehensive education director in municipality (D) gave permission for data collection in this registry study based on data gathered as part of Anna-Kaisa Berisha's PhD work. The participants were drawn from an administrative registry on a cohort group (n=1428) of pupils who started seventh grade in the municipality in 2013. The rest of the relevant information was gathered by contacting each school about the types of classrooms offered for the children. The municipality in this second study was interesting for its arrangement of special education, classrooms and schools: municipality (D) had one of the highest numbers of segregated special education institutions due to its long-standing organisation of special education (Teittinen, 2003).

*Municipalities in studies 3 and 4*

Sixteen 16 medium and large municipalities in middle and southern Finland were approached with requests to conduct the research (Appendix 6). The process of

requesting permission from municipalities started in 2014 and continued into the spring of 2015. The process was difficult as it took various attempts to contact administrators. In some cases, the municipalities took a few months to clear the permits. Six municipalities declined or did not respond. The reasons for declining to participate were mixed. One municipality did not want to take part in a school choice study. Another felt that the proceedings to contact the parents of children with special or intensified support through Wilma (electronic communication and assessment tool used by pupils, parents and teachers) were illegal. One municipal leader also suggested studying another municipality closer to the researcher's university. Finally, one municipality leader felt that the city was already doing all it could for children receiving intensified and special education support. Ultimately, 10 municipalities agreed to participate (n=208), and four (A, B, E and F in Table 4.) are considered here in more detail as the others had low response rates (see more information in the participants section 5.5.).

The next section discusses the methods used in each study in this dissertation.

## 5.3    Methods

### 5.3.1  Construction of the studies

*Design of the qualitative interviews in study 1*
Semi-structured interviews (Appendix 5.) were conducted with the participants. As a qualitative research method, interviews are intended to capture the meaning of specific topics in participants' lives (Kvale, 1996). The sample was chosen through an elite sampling method targeting the participants believed to be most informative about a topic (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 85–86), such as the selected families in this study. The aim was to investigate what the parents, children, their assistants and teachers felt about the children's school paths, especially regarding the most suitable classroom and school environment the children while moving from an integrated special group to other kindergartens and schools. The study was also aimed at assessing the effect of the children's ADHD diagnoses on schooling decisions. The period covered was kindergarten to first or second grade. The participants were asked to reflect on groups, schools, neighbourhood school areas, children's friends, learning, teaching practices and teachers. In addition, the children were asked what they liked about kindergarten and schools, what their best memories were and what they remembered about this period in their lives.

*Data collection for study 2*

This study included the total population of seventh graders in a municipality (D). The study aim was to consider which classes the pupils attended by category of support when they started seventh grade in this municipality (D). Registry data allowed for considering the whole target group and, therefore, were reliable and generalisable. In this study, the registry data included the schools (n=17, including four special education institutions) and classrooms the pupils attended, the category of support (regular, intensified or special), the students' gender and first language and neighbourhood school allocation. The schools were considered based on the classrooms they each offered. The data were then analysed using cross-tabulation, chi-squares and the relative proportions of the variables.

*Design of the questionnaire for studies 3 and 4*

In this study, the cluster sample method was used as the population studied was an internally heterogeneous but superficially homogenous group: the parents of first and seventh graders receiving support mostly in cities in southern Finland. Using the online Webropol tool, the questionnaire was administered in 2014, ending in the spring of 2015. The questionnaire was based on the instrument Parents and School Choice—Family Strategies, Segregation and Local School Policies in Finnish and Chilean Comprehensive Schooling (PASC, 2010–2013) (also used in e.g. Seppänen et al., 2015), as well as an extensive literature review concerning parental school choice for children receiving support. The PASC was used to compare the parents' backgrounds and choices, and the extensive literature review added variables used to research special education needs. An electronic questionnaire was administered to reach parents from different parts of the country. Additionally, online questionnaires are fast, economic and ecologic and ensure data safety in all stages of use (Kuula, 2006; Sills & Song, 2002). Finnish parents were assumed to use Internet to communicate with schools on daily basis; therefore, the participants were thought to be electronically literate.

Two similar questionnaires designed for the parents of children in first and seventh grade differed only in the wording of questions 2, 4, 6 and 20. The questionnaire consisted of 54 questions and three sections on the children, school choice and the parents and family background. Almost all the questions were multiple choice but had an open-ended answer option. When designing the questions, it was kept in mind that they should not be misleading or guiding or ask two things at the same time (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The questionnaire used easily understandable language and explained field-specific words. The participants were allowed to skip questions they did not see as relevant, a dynamic way of arranging questionnaires

and a strength of online surveys (Mangunkusum et al., 2006). The questionnaire also had three batteries, two on who most influenced school choice and one on what most influenced school choice (Questionnaire, Appendix 6.).

*From testing to conducting study 1*

A trial interview was conducted to assess the validity of the interview questions. Necessary changes were made to clarify a few questions. Next, the interview times and places most suitable for the participants were arranged. For some participants, the location was their home, workplace, kindergarten or school. The approximate interview time was 45 minutes for the adults and 20 minutes for the children. Similar interview protocols were used for both children and adults, except the adult interviews were longer and more structured whereas the children's interviews were shorter and more conversational. The interviews with children provided additional data rather than primary data.

*Data testing for study 2*

The registry data were cleaned for analysis. The data did not come from an instrument and therefore did not need further testing.

*From testing to conducting studies 3 and 4*

The questionnaire was tested three times. The first and second times, a group of parents and special education teachers looked at it, and the third time, it was reviewed by a parent who had a child in special education and spoke a first language other than Finnish to test the comprehensibility of the questionnaire. After each valuable round of testing, the questionnaire was modified until it reached its current form. The ideas in the questionnaire remained the same, but each round of testing and modifying made it more understandable. The most difficult part was the formation of parental background questions for separated parents who might live with new families. Various fellow researchers checked the technical aspects of the electronic questionnaire before it was administered to the participants.

## 5.4   Data analysis

*Study 1*

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen as a flexible tool to code and theme data sets, especially to find similarities and differences. The method was implemented both from the constructionist and essentialist viewpoints, as these cases provided examples of how meaning and realities affected social discourses through

robust personal experiences. The method was used from a constructionist position to study how meaning, realities and experiences resulted from social discourses. This method permitted evaluating how inclusive discourses and practices affected the participants' experiences, meanings and realities of education paths. The transcribed interviews were read several times to categorise themes.

*Study 2*

The registry data were organised and analysed using cross-tabulation, chi-squares and the relative proportions of the variables. The data were initially stored and analysed using Microsoft Excel and then analysed against using SPSS. These analyses were sufficient to show how pupils were assigned to different schools and classroom.

*Studies 3 and 4*

With SPSS 23.0 Statistical Package, the data were analysed using descriptive analysis, cross-tabulation and the relative proportions of the variables. Descriptive statistics (e.g. frequency, percentage, median, mean, standard deviation, asymmetry, minimum and maximum) were calculated for the items and dimensions from the questionnaire. The analyses mentioned were conducted, and the results were interpreted at a significance level of $p \leq .05$ (confidence interval of 95%). Furthermore, various results were interpreted based on the frequency percentages. These analyses were sufficient to show how the pupils were assigned to different schools and classrooms. In addition, the number of participants was sufficient for this analysis. Some open-ended questions were coded and thematically analysed.

## 5.5    Participants

*Participants in study 1*

Three 6–8-year-old children with ADHD, their parents, three teachers (one special education teacher) and two assistants (n=11) were interviewed around the period of transfer from kindergarten to school. Children started compulsory education in the same integrated special group in a kindergarten with both 5- and 6-year-old pre-schoolers in one city (A). After this integrated special group was closed, these children were assigned to regular kindergarten groups in the catchment area. Due to the parents' work situations, two children moved to different municipalities (B and C) to start first grade.

*Participants in study 2*

This study drew on registry data on an age cohort of seventh graders from throughout a city (D); there was no parental information. This sample thus includes the entire targeted

population in one municipality. The data considered covered school placements at 17 schools with 1438 pupils. Four schools were special education institutions with 81 pupils. Most pupils were from Finnish- or Swedish-speaking backgrounds (n=1238), and a minority had non-Finnish-speaking backgrounds (n=174). The majority of the pupils received regular support. However, among those pupils whose first language was Finnish or Swedish, fewer received intensified support (n=57) than special support (n=117). Among those with a first language other than Swedish or Finnish, more received intensified support (n=45) than special support (n=12). The schools included 33 regular classrooms, 26 specialised classrooms, five special education classrooms and four special schools with special education classrooms in them.

*Participants in studies 3 and 4*

Ten municipalities participated in this study. The intent was for local education authorities to contact the parents of first and seventh graders with special education needs or intensified needs status through Wilma, a school online communication network tool widely used in Finland. Some municipalities proceeded in this way, and others did not, which can be seen in the outcome of the response rate (Table 5.). Four municipalities had high enough response rates to be representative and generalisable (10%, 14%, 20% and 35%), and the participants from these four municipalities made up 79% (n=164) of the sample. However, all ten municipalities were included in the analyses as the study population was relatively small and a possibly difficult-to-reach group, so it was important to not lose even one voice.

**Table 5.** Response rate in studies 3 and 4.

| City | Distribution of questionnaires** | First and seventh graders with intensified or special education | Respondents | Response rate |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1* | 2 | 628 | 9 | 1,4 |
| 2* | 2 | 1181 | 14 | 1,2 |
| 3* | 2 | 439 | 6 | 1,4 |
| 4* | 1 | 568 | 55 | 9,7 |
| 5 | 2 | 150 | 9 | 6 |
| 6 | 1 | 51 | 7 | 13,7 |
| 7 | 1 | 181 | 37 | 20,4 |
| 8 | 1*** | 164 | 58 | 35,4 |
| 9 | 2 | 122 | 1 | 1,2 |
| 10 | 2 | 155 | 12 | 7,7 |
| | | 4369 | | 4,7 |

\* more than 100 000 inhabitants, the rest less than 100 000
\*\* 1=by the municipality, 2=by the researcher to headmasters
\*\*\* sent to all parents of first and seventh graders with a letter aimed at those receiving special or intensified education support

Studies 3 and 4 used socioeconomic status as a significant variable in family background, a common practice in school choice studies in Finland (Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen, 2006; Seppänen et al., 2015). Social classes in Finland have a strong emphasis on professions (Erola, 2011), so occupations presented the starting point for classification (Statistics Finland, 2010). Professions were given ordinal classifications to group and make sense of them. The classification scale came from Erikson and Goldthorpe's (1992) widely used class schema, also employed by the National Statistics of Finland. Social class was based on profession, salary and highest completed degree, following other studies (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; Erola, 2010; Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen et al., 2015).

Most of the analysis recoded the classes into loose, collapsed categories of three socioeconomic classes—upper class, middle class and lower class. Each class combined two extreme groups with the closest class. These three socioeconomic classes loosely corresponded with particular labour categories: professionals and managers formed the upper class; technicians, associate professionals and clerical support workers formed the middle class; and service, sales and skilled, partly skilled and unskilled labour formed the lower class (Erola, 2010, 40).

These three socioeconomic classes were formed by adding to the highest class consisting of professional, managerial and technical professions (classifications 1 and 2) individuals who had received degrees from tertiary institutions or belonged to the highest income category (more than 60 000 euros gross annual income per parent). The highest class also included those technicians and associate professionals (classification 3) who fell into the highest income category. The middle class comprised technicians and associate professionals (classification 3) in income categories other than the highest income category and clerical support, service and sales workers (classifications 4 and 5) who held tertiary education degrees or had a good (40 000–60 000 euros gross annual income per parent) or high income. Finally, the lower class comprised technicians, associate professionals and service and sales workers (classifications 3–5) with upper-secondary education degrees and less than 40 000 euros gross annual income per parent, along with skilled manual, partly skilled and unskilled labour (classifications 6–9). (Seppänen et al. 2015, 539.)" (From study 3, page 5-6).

Socioeconomic status allowed for loosely linking the parents' positions to the notions of social, cultural and economic capitals. In this social class division, a plurality of parents came from lower-middle-class backgrounds (35%), followed by upper-middle-class (31%) and middle-class (23%) backgrounds. The two smallest classes were the opposite ends of the spectrum: the upper class (8%) and the lower class (3%).

The social classes in this study were similar to national statistics on the social classes of the families of children receiving special support (Kirjavainen & Pulkkinen, 2013, 63). Thus, parents of children receiving support in the lower-middle and lower social class were overrepresented in both national statistics and this study in comparison to general population (parents with children in general). In a difference from the national statistics, the parents overrepresented in this study were in the upper-middle class and upper-class categories.

Of the 208 participants who completed the questionnaire, most (84%) were mothers who responded on the behalf of the whole family. Slightly more than half of the parents (60%) lived in cities with fewer than 100 000 habitants. The participants primarily lived together and had joint custody (70%), although 19% were separated and had joint custody, and 8% were single parents. Overall, 59% were the parents of first graders, while the rest were the parents of seventh graders. The median age of the mothers was 41.00 (SD = 5.976), and the median age of the fathers was 43.00 (SD = 6.970).

## 5.6 Ethical considerations

Since beginning to conduct this work, the researcher has been aware of ethical issues and read and followed good ethical practices proposed by TENK (2009) and the University of Turku's ethical board. The ethical board for non-human sciences was not yet operating when the first study was conducted, but the board was asked to evaluate the procedures for the third and fourth studies in which people were involved by answering the questionnaire. This review covered the study design, questionnaire and all the procedures, including data preservation (Appendix 7.).

Each municipality was asked to participate in the study, and all the participants and their children (study 1) gave consent to participate in the interviews or the questionnaire (studies 3 and 4). Returning the questionnaire was considered to indicate consent to use the answers. The parents in studies 1, 3 and 4 were contacted by email to explain the study procedure (e.g. the time and the voluntary basis and data preservation). The participants could stop doing the interviews or answering the questionnaire at any time. They could also contact the researcher if they wanted more information about the study.

The interview and questionnaire protocols and questions were pre-tested. The place of the interviews (study 1) was considered so that the participants would be comfortable and could choose their own environments. In all the studies, pseudonyms were used for the names of the participants and cities. In study 2, the name of the

city was used, and the entire registry data included no names, so there was no need for pseudonyms. The recorded interview data were deleted after transcription. The questionnaire data were transformed into Excel data and then SPSS data. The transcribed data were preserved and archived in the researcher's computer and have only been seen by the researcher(s) and the supervisors.

Researchers need to be aware of their position in relation to the phenomenon studied, especially when considering social classes, parenthood and children who receive intensified or special support (Kosunen, 2016; Reay, 2004; Vicent & Ball, 2007). From the researchers' perspective, this means that extra care is necessary when forming questions and discussing matters involving these issues. In this case, I was aware that my educational background, upper-class upbringing, foreign background, experience living abroad and lack of children could affect how I constructed research and made meaning. Furthermore, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) speak of reflexivity and the way researchers openly position themselves so that the objects of study can evaluate the researchers' social self and thus their knowledge claims. Revealing one's position when conducting a questionnaire can be hard; however, I attempted to do so by adding my name, place of work, job title, picture and contact address, some of which indicated my position. Adding to the positioning the critical pragmatist viewpoint of this work is political.

## 5.7   Study reliability and validity

The reliability and validity of both qualitative and quantitative methods were addressed. Important questions regarding validity were whether the study measured what was intended, how well it measured what was the intended and whether the conclusions drawn from the results were valid. The section first evaluates the study design then moves to consider questions regarding quantitative data.

Research design varied from the original plan. A research plan by an experienced researcher could have been sounder from the beginning and it would have been more feasible to execute. Here, I understood from the beginning that I would grow as a researcher, therefore much room was left for this journey not only in terms of the study design but the whole dissertation process. Hence, the study design progressed study by study, one article at the time. I took opportunities when they came a long, such was the study with Anna-Kaisa Berisha and Piia Seppänen. Anna-Kaisa and I started discussing school choice especially in terms of special education and whether it can be detected in her data. From there started the article. The research design could be therefore be called process driven. I would raise two issues about the process

drivenness and validity. First, process driven way allows for innovation, because one builds on one's knowledge, rather than from the knowledge that was in the beginning of the plan. Second, this type of working method could lead to kind of chaos with no linkage between the articles. However, following consistently the themes of school choice and special education support helped to stay focused.

In terms of alternative designs there are many. For example, the children in the first study could have been followed throughout the four-year period, this dissertation could have been their school choice story. Second, the principals could have been interviewed, however, the role of the principals was not in the line of interest during the beginning of the study. The original idea was to follow municipalities and their developments, to gather representative data, however there were great difficulty getting past the administration and to receive participants. The municipalities where the majority of the participants came from made passing of the questionnaires to parents mandatory. Therefore, this study of the parents in municipalities became smaller scaled than intended (studies 3 & 4).

Quantitative measures, in particular, statistically significant numbers, are part of the analysis, so the effect size and statistical power had to be considered (Shadish, Cook & Cambell, 2002). As mentioned, studies 2, 3 and 4 primarily analysed descriptive data and cross-tabulations. The analyses were conducted, and the results were interpreted at a significance level of $p \leq .05$ (confidence interval of 95%). The sample in study 2 included the entire target population. In studies 3 and 4, the number of participants was quite low but sufficient for the analysis. For instance, another school choice study (Seppänen et al., 2015) had a response rate of 22%. The results of studies, 2, 3 and 4 can be generalised to the target population in Finnish municipalities but should be done cautiously given the low response rates in studies 3 and 4.

Schools were used to help contact the children's parents, so that all parents who thought that their children needed support could be given an opportunity to participate. It is known that only some people tend to answer questionnaires; therefore, it was pleasing to find a representation corresponding to the Finnish national statistic in the study. Furthermore, in studies 3 and 4, those participants who answered the questionnaire filled it out with care. This could indicate that the parents felt that this topic studied was important to them.

Regarding the concepts presented to the participants, the interviews participants could ask to clarify concepts they did not understand. The concepts used were based on prior studies (e.g. PASC). In the questionnaire, terms that could require further explanation (e.g. neighbourhood school and categories of support) were opened in the text. Furthermore, testing the questionnaire and interview questions

with different target groups helped identify difficult terminologies and correct other misunderstandings in the text. The risk surrounding the concepts in this dissertation was that school choice studies use their own conceptual frames, as do the critical pragmatists. The risk, challenges and possible messy outcomes of the concepts used were understood. Furthermore, concepts can be lost in translation for non-native English speakers.

Validity often concerns only quantitative measures, but here, this issue could be approached from the perspective of credibility (Cho & Lee, 2014). Qualitative measures were used primarily in study 1 but also studies 3 and 4 when discussing the open-ended questions. Here, credibility referred to how well the data and the chosen analysis methods addressed the research focus. This meant that the participants should possess the needed information, which they did, particularly in study 1, which used elite sampling. Credibility also involves the presentation of significant information and the relevance of the extracts. The relevance of information was long considered in this study (study 1) and was an issue from the beginning. To deal with this problem, the whole study then was divided into two halves: one on school paths and one (not part of this dissertation) on diagnosis. Cho and Lee (2014) also address the issue of transferability, or how findings can be generalised to other groups or context. In this case, the issues and successes the pupils encountered in their school paths merely told us about their heterogeneous experiences. However, if other researchers reproduced the study, they would find similar answers, and in this way, the responses could be transferred.

The reliability of the results can be discussed from the perspective of who answered the questions and how they did so. As mentioned, the participants answered completed the questionnaire. Many answers to the open-ended questions indicated they were relevant to the participants. An issue concerning who answered the questionnaire in studies 3 and 4 should be considered here. Some municipalities sent the questionnaires to school principals, who passed it on to all parents, not only the target group. This problem was mitigated in a number of ways, including addressing the questionnaire to those with support needs and asking questions about the support needs and diagnosis. The parents whose children did not receive support and were not in special education were asked to answer who felt that their child needed support.

# 6.  RESULTS

This dissertation is based on four articles and a further investigation of the municipalities as organisers of comprehensive education. In Kosunen's (2016, p. 65) words, this dissertation is an examination of the social space of school choice that 'constitutes the relative positions of agents within the social hierarchies of families, and the symbolic hierarchies of schools within the borders of local governance and urban limitations' regarding parents whose children receive support. In addition, this research considers 'the schools within the borders of local governance' and the local leaders of municipal comprehensive education as the institutional space of school choice (Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011; Varjo et al., 2014). In addition, Skrtic's (1991a; 1991b; 1995a; 1995b; 1995c) theoretical framework is applied to the sub-national, municipal-level, institutional school choice space and the local leaders of municipal comprehensive education. Skrtic views schools as bureaucracies and special education as an artefact of general education. Skrtic's work is fruitfully applied here as the Finnish education system, especially the support system, has strong relation to bureaucracies in support and schooling decisions. In addition, some municipalities have started to decrease segregated special education. This study compares the educational bureaucracies with parental school choices within the studied municipalities. Thus, this work is in the intersection study of two theoretical perspectives. The first results section (6.1.) explains the organisation of comprehensive education in the chosen municipalities, emphasising special education organisation and school choice. In the second results section (6.2.), the articles are considered.

The theoretical contribution of this dissertation is the intersectional consideration of school choice space and Skrtic's framework. Furthermore, this study offers a view of the social and institutional school choice space in light of support needs, which have not been widely studied in Finland. Throughout the study, the parents of children receiving support seem to have great confidence in the neighbourhood or the catchment area school principle. As well, there are alternative organisations of comprehensive education by municipalities, which apply the catchment area principle in various ways. Four ways organisations of comprehensive education in municipalities, ranging from inclusive to segregation, are presented later in the results chapter (6.3.). As a final remark, it is worth pondering whether the decline of segregated special-education schools and classrooms, to some extent, and the growing use of selective classrooms will result in a flipped effect: all pupils stay in the neighbourhood schools—except for those (usually pupils from upper-class backgrounds) who attend selective classrooms, often commuting to non-neighbourhood schools (e.g. Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen, 2006; Seppänen et al., 2015) and those pupils who receive severe special support.

## 6.1 Organisation of selective and special education in municipalities

The results in this section focus on the information gathered from the municipal websites and short telephone interviews with the leaders of municipal comprehensive education. The second section considers the results from the research articles (studies 1–4). The Finnish municipalities in this study represent different areas and sizes, both urban and rural, from the east, west, south and north (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Six municipalities.

| Munici-pality | km² | Population | Location | Catchment areas | Schools | Special education institutions | Study |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1700 | less than 100 000 | East | 5 | 25 | No | 1, 3 and 4 |
| B | 250 | more than 200 000 | South | 3 | 40 | No | 1, 3 and 4 |
| C | 6000 | less than 50 000 | North | 1 | 13 | No | 1 |
| D | 250 | less than 200 000 | West | 32 | 32 | Yes | 2 |
| E | 200 | less than 50 000 | East | 1 | 11 | No | 3 and 4 |
| F | 1200 | less than 100 000 | West | 20 | 25 | Yes | 3 and 4 |

*Municipality A (studies 1, 3 and 4)*
This municipality in eastern Finland has fewer than 100 000 inhabitants and spreads over 1700 km². This municipality has five catchment areas, with 25 schools and more than 6000 pupils. Two schools are lower-secondary schools, and three offer both primary and lower-secondary education. Schools in each catchment area have special education classes. Furthermore, four schools offer centralised classes specialised in particular difficulties.

All neighbourhood schools have selective classes in music from third grade and in English from first grade. Starting in seventh grade, selective classes cover different topics such as science, arts, high technology and ice hockey. The city website informs pupils and their parents about the law stipulating that municipalities assign children in catchment areas. In matters of special education, parents' wants are heard, and the assigned school may be somewhere else than in the neighbourhood area. Marketing brochures help parents and pupils choose and complete applications for selective classes.

In the brief phone interview, the comprehensive education director reveals that from among the five catchment areas,

> Principals decide where the children attend to schools. The catchment areas are built on the basis of lower-secondary schools, meaning that there is at least one lower-secondary school in every catchment area, [along with] many primary schools. This means that schooling decisions are 'handmade'

considering *each* child. Here, we consider comprehensive education running from grades 1 to 9 to be an important value.

The organisation of special education is inclusive.

> A few years back, special education allocations were on the rise, and I decided to do something. We have been slowly closing special education schools and after that classrooms. I mean, we want to step by step diminish centralised special education. That is the direction. Neighbourhood schools are the most important. I mean, not many of the youth want to move to other schools to selective classes in seventh grade as they want to stay with their friends in an environment that they know!

Furthermore, the director describes actions taken to decrease segregated special education.

> When we started moving towards more inclusive education and quit special education schools, we started educating the teachers with a 10-day neuropsychological course on understanding pupils with behavioural issues. Now, around 75% of teachers have completed this training course. The teachers are taught to understand, problem solve and negotiate with pupils who have behavioural difficulties.

Next, the director discusses resources in the organisation of comprehensive education. The resources are assigned where they are needed.

> The different areas receive resources depending on the support level of the pupils. This means that the areas benefit from having children with support needs. This was what I did after special education allocations started to grow; the centralised special education growth had to be stopped somehow. We have not made any budget cuts but allocated resources to neighbourhood schools.

*Municipality B (studies 1, 3 and 4)*

This 250-km² municipality has more than 200 000 inhabitants and three catchment areas, with more than 40 comprehensive education schools. According to the director of municipality comprehensive education, the children are assigned within the catchment areas as decided by area principals. These principals make allocations based on the criteria for a short, safe journey to school and special arrangements, such as physical disabilities. The municipal website states that the designated neighbourhood schools are not necessarily the physically closest schools. The parents are informed

that they may express a preference for schools which, for instance, siblings or friends attend. If a school 'is not to one's liking´ so to speak, parents may apply directly to the schools they want their children to attend.

According to the comprehensive education director, 'the school classrooms are optimised to have 21 pupils in the classrooms, from the catchment area'. The municipality has undertaken many changes since the 2011 special education reform.

> There is great push towards inclusive education. We do not have special education institutions any more as such but five to six schools with classes that the whole municipality uses for children with certain disabilities, such as autism or mental disabilities. There are approximately 1% of pupils in special education classes.

The resources are carefully allocated to reach the needed places.

> First of all, the resources are allocated in a way that 25% of the funding depends on the area. By the equality index, such areas that have more immigrants, lower education status or more unemployment receive more funding. In addition, 75% of the schools' funding depends on the number of pupils in the area. The resources are allocated on the basis of schools; the schools then make their own decisions how to use it. All special education teachers work in classrooms.

Furthermore, the comprehensive education director explains that the municipality saved funds by closing special education institutions.

> The money that we saved after closing down special institutions was nothing really, except for the school lifts to special schools around the city. With this money, we educated more special education teachers, especially peripatetic special education teachers. The priority for the city is that the staff is well trained. Now, all other pupils attend catchment area schools, except for pupils with mental disabilities, because the disability law states that schools need to have certain kinds of daily activities, and we cannot offer them in every school.

According to the director, inclusion is easier in more heavily populated municipalities.

> Inclusive education can be offered, especially when the municipality is large enough to shift around classrooms. We have now, for example, suggested that a few smaller schools optimise their groups together. In this way, the area principals have one more special education teacher to place where most needed.

When asked about how selective classes fit in this inclusive education, the municipality leader comments:

> We decreased selective classes in 2005, then we decreased the amount again. However, if it is added in the east area, it should also be in the west area. For example, sports classes we offer more. We also have English language groups, and if there are more pupils than can fit in the class, there will be entrance exams'.

*Municipality C*

Fewer than 50 000 inhabitants live in a 6000-km² area, with 11 primary schools and two lower-secondary schools. Each school has its own catchment area, so school principals decide pupil intake. Consequently, the neighbourhood school usually is the school closest to students' homes. The municipal comprehensive education director explains that northern Finns have a mind-set that so-called neighbourhood schools can be far away from homes:

> We try to keep in mind that the distances to schools should be bearable. This is where we have to place resources: to drive children to and from schools. Parents register at their neighbourhood school.

Although there are 13 schools, the reality is a little different.

> Actually, there are two larger schools in the more populated areas, and the rest are small, with, for example, only three teachers. In these two schools, there are such special education classrooms, which are flexible in a way so that if things are going smoothly, the children return to regular classrooms.

The special education system is tailored around small municipalities.

> The special education is organised in a way that the parents discuss with the teachers whether the children should be in neighbourhood school. There is a peripatetic special education teacher to consult whether to move the child to one of the special education classrooms. There is, for example, a centralised education classroom for children with severe disabilities. We also have a special education co-coordinator, who sees the full picture and makes suggestions with the parents to the school, as special education decisions are made by the schools.

Resources are allocated to schools.

Each school has its own budget, with special education having a larger share. Here, in the north, as there are not so many people, we can allocate resources where they are needed more easily than in the south, I think.

The future looks quite similar to the present.

We do not have selective classes, and I do not think we will. Special education classes stay the same. However, there is more emphasis on children staying in their neighbourhood schools, and we are planning to solve issues in learning by adding clinic-type or drop-in appointments.

*Municipality D (study 2)*

This 250-km² municipality with a population of fewer than 100 000 has 32 schools divided into three areas similar to catchment areas. However, each school is considered to have its own catchment area. Thus, each principal makes allocation decisions. Parents may register with their neighbourhood schools, but the comprehensive education administration has the right to move students to schools within the area. Schools within the area may negotiate pupils depending on their numbers, the aim is not to increase class sizes based on the language studying choices pupils have made. If a school principal disagrees with a pupil's choice, the area leader makes the decision. Each area has a lower-secondary school designated as a neighbourhood school.

The director of municipality special education was interviewed.

The special education decisions are first made in neighbourhood schools by the special education teams. Pedagogical decisions are referred to me through the Wilma system, where the decision is finalised. There is also opportunity to appeal if the choice is not satisfactory, although the pedagogical statement is made together with the parents. Of course, specialists are consulted as well. … There are many people who are consulted.

The director of special education describes the municipality's special education system, which is among the most segregated in Finland.

There are six special education institutions, and within three school catchment areas, there are special education classrooms where children can be assigned from through the area. Special education classrooms usually take around ten pupils. However, we try to give special support in the neighbourhood schools.

When asked about the resources and the future of education, the leader replies:

The resources are assigned to schools after the schooling decisions are made, and children already are in the schools, *not there and then* when the decisions are being made. The resources travel through the area principals to schools, although I have to say that pupils with special education needs or immigrants are considered when the funding finally arrives.

The municipality also offers specialised classes with entrance exams from the first and second grades and more in seventh grade. Only a few schools have selective classes in music, arts, sports, math and languages.

*Municipality E (studies 3 and 4)*

This municipality of approximately 200 km² has nearly 30 000 inhabitants and 11 comprehensive education institutions in three school areas. Each area has one comprehensive education school going from primary to lower secondary education, as well as many primary schools. Each catchment area offers special education classes aimed at lower-secondary pupils considered to be at risk of dropping out and not continuing to secondary education. These are not special education classrooms per se but have a strong social, psychological and educational support focus in the classroom. A few centralised special education classes in the municipality are aimed at specific difficulties. Two schools within the same catchment area offer selective classes in music and languages. The internet source stated that the neighbourhood school allocation is conducted in a flexible matter by the municipal comprehensive education administration.

In an interview, the director of comprehensive education reveals that great changes to the organisation of education have been made.

After the summer of 2017, there will be three centralised schooling areas, with one lower-secondary education institutions and many primary schools and day-cares. This means around 1000 pupils in each of these areas, all physically close to each other within these three school centrums. However, we have not solved all the issues concerning locations yet. Since the beginning of this year, we have had only one catchment area. The principals consider together where each child should go, especially from sixth to seventh grade. The school decisions are then suggested to the parents, and if parents feel that they want their child to attend to other schools, they may come and ask for change. This way the *customers* are happier. We are now following the new curriculum, which means that although our education system is one, we follow area-specific practices. Each of the centralised areas will have its own specialty and selective classes. Currently, there are only music classes and language classes.

Principals finalise special education decisions.

> Special education decisions within the school are made by the principals of the school. Before it was me, the leader of municipality comprehensive education. This means an administrative decision. There are only two special education classes: one primary education class for pupils with socioemotional difficulties and another lower-secondary class for pupils with difficulties at school. We have many part-time special education teachers to support those pupils who are in regular education. There is a strong emphasis on inclusive practice, I would say. Special education support decisions are made by me; however, I have help, consulting with the special education teacher who works directly under me. This person understands special education practices throughout the whole city. Generally, pupils are located in neighbourhood schools; however, there are some special education classes.

School principals also allocate resources.

> The resources are allocated by the principals in each school. The resources to the schools are based on catchment area planning, assistants, teachers' teaching hours, group sizes, location and such. The principals make their own decisions whether they take assistants or special education teachers. The principals consult the consulting special education teaching with this decision, but the deciders are the principals.

*Municipality F (Studies 3 and 4):*
The 85 000 inhabitants of this municipality in western Finland live in a 1200-km² area. Twenty catchment areas are formed based around primary schools. This municipality has 25 comprehensive education institutions; five are lower-secondary schools, and the rest are primary schools. Three of the five lower-secondary schools offer special education classrooms. There are three special education institutions and one special education institution at a hospital school. Of the 7300 pupils in comprehensive education, 500 are in special education. The pupils are informed that they may apply to other catchment area schools but are assigned by the municipality. One primary education institution offers selective classes in music, arts and English, which continue to a certain grade in lower-secondary education. Furthermore, lower-secondary schools offer selective classes in subjects such as sports, arts and entrepreneurship.

According to the municipal director of comprehensive education, one of the four special education institutions is being shut down.

> Special education is a difficult matter here as for some reason, the special education decisions are growing. It's bad really. … Many pupils who are integrated into regular groups are then moved into special education institutions. The number of allocations to special education rose by 50% from last year. I wonder if the amount of diagnoses has shot up or what is happening.

Furthermore, according to the municipality, most special education teachers are in special classrooms or institutions.

> We currently have a few special education teachers who are free to teach in the remaining institutions, but the situation keeps getting worse. There is one special education teacher to 100 pupils. We have opened few classrooms for those kinds of pupils who cannot find their place and for immigrants. We have made efforts for comprehensive education institutions to continue from first to ninth grade, and we would like to close more full-time special education classes.

When asked about the allocation of resources, the municipality leader explained that 'the city council decides upon a budget that is allocated to schools, special institutions and special education classes where the resources are needed'.

*Conclusions from municipalities organising selective and special education*
Comprehensive education is organised in many ways depending on size, location, tradition, municipal politics and municipal directors' views of the legal framework. The autonomy of municipalities and municipal actors is by no means a new phenomenon (Juusenaho, 2004; Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011; Varjo et al., 2014; Varjo et al., 2015). In particular, the Comprehensive Education Law (L 628/1998) allows room for many interpretations of the organisation of comprehensive education. In Table 7, different ways of organising comprehensive education can be seen and categorised into different types based on the use of catchment areas, regular classes and special education classrooms, opportunities for selective education and the loose allocation of resources. These types are towards inclusive, (small) traditional, traditional segregated and centralised, (inclusive, yet selective). Towards-inclusive municipalities try to mix and optimise pupils within larger catchment areas. In (small) traditional municipalities, students are assigned to nearby catchment area schools. Traditional and segregated municipalities use special schools, classroom and selective classes with small catchment areas. Finally, centralised municipalities mix pupils in an inclusive way; however, the catchment areas have one selective topic emphasis.

**Table 7.** Organisation of comprehensive education in municipalities.

| Municip. | Catchment area | Special education | Selective education | Resources | Types of organizing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Five catchment areas, based on five lower secondary institutions and many primaries. The area principles decide allocations of all pupils. Catchment area schools are organized/ optimized considering each child. | Emphasis on inclusive values; balance between children with support needs and without needs. No special schools. Some special classes. | Selective classes in music and languages in the primary schools, and more in lower secondary; however they are to be diminished. | Recourses are allocated by the schools, depending on how many children with support needs are in them. | Towards Inclusive |
| B | Three catchment areas, with over 40 schools. Area principals allocate children to the catchment area schools. Approx. 21 children in classrooms with optimized planning of schools from children from the area. | No special education institutions. Six centralized special education classrooms where children with for example autism or mental disabilities attend. | There should be balance between selective classes in different districts. | The resources are allocated on the basis of amount of pupils, and area status. Schools decide the use of funding. | Towards inclusive |
| C | Each school makes a catchment area; principals decide the intake of children.  Special education co-ordinator helps with organizing. | Special education classes in some schools. Centralized special education classes for pupils with specific disabilities. No special education institutions. | No selective classes. | Each school has their own budget, which includes special education budget. Many resources are spent on lifts for pupils. | (Small) Traditional |
| D | There are three school catchment areas; however each school considers their own intake. | There are special education classes and schools. | Many selective classes to choose from. | Resources through area principals, based on amount and type of pupils, retrospectively reported to the director. | Traditional, segregative |
| E | There are three school centrums, with one lower secondary institution in them and many primary institutions. The whole municipality forms a catchment area. The principals, decide together where the children should be allocated. | Strong emphases on classes which try prevent social and economic exclusion by proving support relating to further education. Two centralized special education classes for specific difficulties. | There will be more specialized classes in the future, each school centrum will specialize in. | Resources are given to principals decide how they use them. Resources are based on for example the teachers, the pupils, the area and teaching hours. | Centralized, inclusive, yet selective |
| F | There are 20 catchment areas that are formed on the basis of primary education institutions. | Four special education institutions, in addition, special education classrooms. Special education numbers are rising. | There are many selective classes to choose from. | Resources are decided by the city council, and then allocated to schools, special schools and classrooms. | Traditional Segregative |

The municipalities organise where educational support is received in different ways, and in many cases, parents may express their preferences for where their children attend school. Another interesting point is that a catchment area may include large areas with many schools called neighbourhood schools by law, although they are not the geographically closest schools to home. How do the parents of children who receive support view these choices and neighbourhood schools? The parents' views based on the results from studies 1–4 are discussed next.

## 6.2    Results from studies 1–4

This section offers summaries of the articles, whose text can be found in the appendix (Appendices 1–4) and conclusion of them (in section 6.3.). The starting point of each article is the same: parents' views on the change under the Comprehensive Education Law to a three-tiered system, including the municipal level. The articles focus on parent´s views of children´s schooling or pupil allocation by social class, gender and level of support.

### Article 1: Towards inclusive schooling policies in Finland: a multiple-case study from policy to practice

New education laws that emphasise inclusive ideology were recently introduced into the Finnish educational system. Finnish municipalities are known to have much power in organising comprehensive education practices. Do municipalities consequently have different interpretations of this new law, keeping in mind that it is a new practice, which always encounters unexpected issues?

In this study, I examine whether these laws provide more inclusive practices and assess whether the changes in the laws match the participants' views on education. Semi-structured interviews with the parents, teachers and assistants of three 6–8 years-old children diagnosis with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were conducted around the period of transfer from kindergarten to schools in three municipalities. The official municipal websites were examined to find the types of classrooms offered.

The results show that classrooms do not meet all the participants' expectations and are not satisfactorily inclusive. To offer structure and safety, the classrooms in catchment area schools should be smaller and include pupils with and without special education support, so they can learn from and support each other. The parents and staff also emphasise the importance of one-to-one interactions with professional staff. In conclusion, the effect of the new laws can be seen through the varying and, to some

extent, unequal organisation of special education support in the municipalities. What is offered to the children depends on not only how municipalities organise support but also on what parents choose.

## Article 2: The contrast of inclusion and school choice policies in Finland (*Inkluusion ja kouluvalinnan dilemma—oppilaan tuen taso ja yläkoulujen oppilaaksiotto Turussa*)

This article examines the relationship of inclusion and school choice policy. In recent decades, policies related to global freedom of choice have strongly influenced the Finnish education field. At the same time, inclusive values are gaining acceptance and emphasis as the values of neighbourhood schools and the law under the three-tiered support system (Basic Education Act 642/2010). How do these policies and values manifest in the allocation of pupils in one municipality in Finland?

The allocation of pupils to schools and classrooms are analysed by support level, catchment area, gender and first language using pupil register data on 13-year-olds in a Finnish city (D). The research shows that half of the pupils with regular support attend selective specialised classrooms, and the others general classrooms. Pupils with intensified support usually attend general classrooms, and pupils with special education support attend special education classrooms. Differences related to foreign first language appear among pupils who receive regular support: they attend selective classes less frequently than other groups. Boys who receive special education support attend special education classrooms more often than girls. Pupil intake among schools is polarised: schools with selective classrooms have few children in special education, while other schools enrol all pupils regardless of their need for special support. In Turku, inclusion and neighbourhood schools are not for all pupils.

## Article 3: Special support and neighbourhood school allocation in Finland: a study on parental school choice

Although the neoliberal discourse on the freedom of parental school choice has expanded to the Finnish education system, the government has maintained the principle of neighbourhood school (sometimes referred to as catchment area school) allocation. Moreover, in 2010, the Finnish education system undertook reform of its special needs education. This reform modified the organisation of educational support to be more flexible so that depending on support needs, pupils are entitled to receive support in three categories: general, intensified and special (Basic Education Act 642/2010). The focus of this article is to examine parental positions on school choice

by parents' social class and children's support needs in comprehensive education. The study results are based on a quantitative questionnaire, with responses from 208 participants drawn primarily from four Finnish municipalities.

The study finds that the category of a child's support needs, rather than the parents' socioeconomic class determines school allocation. Furthermore, the more support the parents feel their child needs, the more importance they place on special education practices and the less on neighbourhood school allocation. In addition, the parents' opinions are found to differ based on social class rather than category of support, although attending neighbourhood schools is seen as the single most important element of school allocation. In conclusion, we argue that the social segregation of students with special education needs can be avoided if the current level of school choice is maintained, the principle of neighbourhood school allocation is preserved in the education policy agenda, and the multi-professional board, including parents, chooses to re-organise and re-evaluate the support needed in neighbourhood schools.

### Article 4: Special support and school choice in Finland: who should decide where my child is schooled?

Despite the freedom of parental school choice recognised in the Finnish education system (Seppänen et al., 2015), the government has maintained the principle of neighbourhood school allocation. Moreover, special needs education underwent reform in 2010, with intent to make the organisation of educational support more flexible. Due to the reform, all pupils are entitled to receive support, divided into three categories: general, intensified and special support (Basic Education Act 642/2010). The professionals in the multi-professional school board influence school choice for children receiving intensified and special support.

The focus of this article is to examine through parental views the extent of parental, professional and bureaucratic school choice in relation to parents' social class and children's allocation and support needs in comprehensive education. The study results are based on a quantitative questionnaire, with responses from 208 participants drawn primarily from four Finnish municipalities.

The study finds that the parents mostly feel that their children should attend neighbourhood schools regardless of whether they are an option. The same choice strategies are observed among the parents whose children receive regular support and intensified support. These strategies, such as choosing to live in a certain neighbourhood and to attend selective classes, are used mostly by upper-class parents. The parents

whose children receive regular and intensified support feel that school allocation is influenced primarily by the parents and secondly by the teachers. Those children who receive support in special education category usually attend non-neighbourhood schools, a choice highly influenced by the professionals. In conclusion, the stronger the support needed, and the more professional decisions are made, the higher the parents' social class is, and the higher the likelihood that choice strategies are used is. The Finnish education system exhibits subtle polarisation.

## 6.3    Conclusions based on the article results

The more severe children's educational needs are, the less concerned parents are with neighbourhood schools (studies 1 and 3). The more educational support is needed, the more special education classrooms are used (studies 1–4). Most parents, however, feel that their children should attend neighbourhood schools to learn to function in their neighbourhoods and have good peer relations (studies 1, 3 and 4). Upper-class parents whose children have support needs have more variety in choice use. Few parents apply for their children to join selective classes, while some move as a schooling strategy (study 4). The parents' opinions on importance of schooling vary by social class (study 3). For most children, professionals heavily influence the decisions (studies 1, 3 and 4).

As municipalities have organised support, many have abolished special education institutions. In addition, comprehensive education directors have attempted to keep selective classes to minimum. Other municipalities support the polarisation of special schools and schools with selective classes (study 2, also the interviews in the summary part). In conclusion, municipalities have organised schooling in diverse ways, introducing inequality into the education system. In some municipalities, pupils stay in regular classrooms within neighbourhood schools, while in others, pupils may be assigned to segregated special education classes and schools. In this study, parents want neighbourhood schools, but it should be asked: do the parents know that their neighbourhood school may be somewhere else than they think?

# 7.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aims of this dissertation are to study municipalities' organisation of comprehensive education and support for children in the first and seventh grades; to consider the inclusion and exclusion factors in the decision-making of parents whose children receive support; and, lastly, to understand, by whom and how choices are made in the municipalities.

This discussion section follows the results-driven style, presenting results of the overall dissertation. The overall framework is discussed, along with the results on parental choice and the municipal organisation of education. Drawing on Skrtic's work on adhocracy and paradigm shifts, the intersectional framework of this school choice research combines parental views, the paradigm shift from equality-based education to market-oriented education and the emergence of various types of special education organisation (towards inclusive, (small) traditional, traditional segregative, and centralised). The results on the differences in municipalities' organisation of special education and parents' actorship in schooling choices and desires are considered. In other words, the results deliberate the social space of school choice (Kosunen, 2016) from the perspective of parents whose children receive more support and the institutional school choice space (e.g. Varjo & Kalalahti, 2011) of the municipalities where the families live. The social space of school choice also includes all the actors other than parents who might affect school choice, namely, the professional and administrative actors.

## 7.1   Municipalities

### 7.1.1  Organisation of comprehensive education in municipalities with reference to Skrtic

The movement of parents with assets and capitals through the education system is facilitated or restricted by the law and municipal arrangements. Understanding how parents move through the system requires knowing how the comprehensive education system is organised. This examination of parental school choice from different perspectives can be called theory triangulation (Denzin, 2006) as the parents are considered through their views on school choice and the broader perspectives of the organisation of the comprehensive education system and the opening up and closing of choices in different municipalities. Furthermore, school choice is examined in school choice studies and from the perspective of support, which has not previously been studied in this way in the Finnish case.

In this dissertation, I investigate the municipal organisation of comprehensive education by examining the overall organisation of special, regular and selective classes. I categorise municipalities' organisation of education following Skrtic's theory of adhocratic schooling. This notion helps identify inclusive measures in the organisation of comprehensive education, where it is now and where it should be in terms of inclusion. However, Skrtic's theory lacks concrete ideas of what adhocratic education is in practice.

The past organisation of the Finnish education system had a dual system of special education and regular education, which has become far more complex. The 2010 special education reform transformed the dual system of support more fluid support for learning. Alongside special education classrooms, part-time special education classrooms and regular classrooms, selective classes have been added. The extent of the use of these classrooms, as well as student allocation by school administrators or parental choice, varies across municipalities. These organisational differences in municipalities reflect the varying number of pupils receiving support across the nation (Finnish National Statistics, 2016). The differences in organisation mean that the system cannot simply be called dual or even triple but, instead, complex, as seen in this study. An interesting finding in this dissertation is, that some municipalities have decided to polarise students' paths, some have remained traditional, and some have moved towards inclusive education, closer to Skrtic's adhocracy. The next question to ask is that if the system is different everywhere, if it is decentralised and individualised to this extent, how equal is it, and what are the consequences?

### 7.1.2 Diverse institutional model of school space

The diverse institutional model of school choice space, in which the organisation of comprehensive education emphasises efficiency and economy and optimises classrooms by size, can surprise parents when their catchment area school is far from the neighbourhood school next door (municipalities A, B and E). In these municipalities, pupil allocation is decided by catchment area. (Varjo et al., 2015, 72.) Furthermore, this study finds that optimisation is largely related to careful consideration of children with support needs and other children to regular classrooms, so that none of the classrooms would have too many children with support needs in them, or that the support needs would not clash. Three of the most towards inclusive municipalities use this optimisation strategy to assign children to neighbourhood schools. Optimisation, therefore, can be related to inclusive values, but it can also be used as a sorting device for all pupils except those who choose to apply to selective classes and those assigned to centralised special education classes. One municipality plans to increase and polarise

choices among different schools according to the new curriculum. This municipality, however, has reduced the number of special education institutions and attempted to assign children with support needs to neighbourhood schools with their peers. This can be an example of a municipality adopting a neoliberal organisation. Some pupils apply to catchment areas other than their own to attend the desired selective classroom, while others stay in their neighbourhood schools.

In the Swedish case, the lack of concreteness of inclusive practices allows schools and principals to make their own interpretations and still keep in line with the policy aims (Göransson et al., 2011; Magnusson, 2015). A similar trend can be seen in interpretations of the Finnish education laws as some municipalities decide to give schools more freedom to organise education according to more individual ethos, while the schools in other municipalities accord with the overarching paradigm of school organisation. Frankly, those municipalities with a stronger emphasis on inclusive paradigms organise schools in similar ways.

Another point to consider is whether catchment areas consisting of many schools and using optimisation of pupils can diminish geographical segregation by mixing pupils from different areas (Figure 1.). Area principals, however, have great, centralised power and responsibility for student allocation in these municipalities. This immense power held by one person could be weakened by, for instance, forming teams to consider the allocation of children to different schools. This, in turn, could decentralise the power of one person and make decisions less arbitrary without establishing too much bureaucracy (see Skrtic's adhocracy). In the municipalities falling into the towards-inclusive category, in Skrtic's (1995d, 248) terms, pigeonholing of pupils to certain school paths is decreased precisely by optimisation. The optimisation of pupils across schools by area principals who handpick students has its roots in the decentralisation of the Finnish education system.

Another way of assigning children to neighbourhood schools instead of catchment area allocations is by schools, with each school acting as its own catchment area (municipalities C, D and F) (Varjo et al., 2015, p. 73). In addition, municipalities using the regional model or larger catchment areas need to further define how they assign children to schools compared to municipalities using school-based catchment areas. These types of polarizing municipalities tend to have both special education institutions and centralised special education classrooms. Furthermore, municipalities using school-based catchment areas resemble area demographics, which might be linked to area segregation. Another issue with using schools as catchment area is that there might be many children with support needs with similar or clashing backgrounds, while the catchment area offers no flexibility for the organising or optimising schools.

This situation might leave no other option but to segregate children with support needs to special schools or classrooms (see study 1, Harri's case). Using school-based catchment areas thus can result in children with support needs being sent to special schools or centralised classes if schools are not flexible in their allocations. Figure 1 presents the municipalities by their institutional school choice spaces, alongside municipalities from a previous study (Varjo et al., 2015).
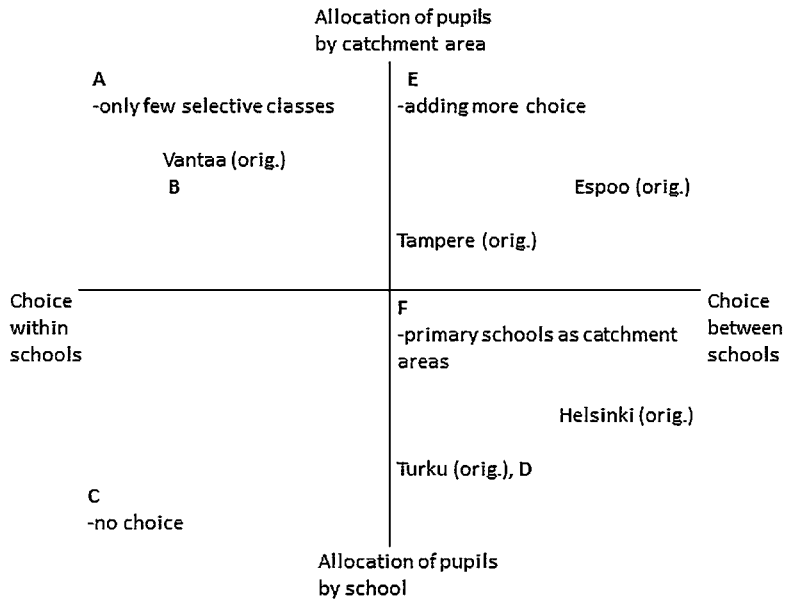


**Figure 1.** Studied municipalities (A–F) and municipalities from the original study in the institutional school choice space in urban Finland (Varjo et al., 2015, p. 82).

Some municipal (A and B) comprehensive education leaders have taken the initiative to reduce special education institutions and special education centralised classrooms, which, in turn, has reduced the cost of school lifts. The cost savings have been used to train teachers. According to these municipal comprehensive education leaders, the municipalities have neither saved nor added to the cost of education through these recent inclusive changes. Although some municipalities have made this shift, others have continued down the traditional segregated routes. The parents in this study mostly want their children in neighbourhood schools. However, do all parents recognise that their neighbourhood school can be any of, for example, the six schools in the area?

A recent study on support measures in various municipalities confirms that municipalities differ in their organisation of support (Lintuvuori et al., 2017). According to the study, the municipal differences are especially large in the

organisation of support practices for children with support needs, particularly in extended comprehensive education decisions, which were most commonly used in eastern Finland. However, in this dissertation, three municipalities, two in the east and one in the south, had abolished segregated special education institutions and tried to assign pupils mostly to regular classrooms in neighbourhood schools. Lintuvuori et al. (2017) further find that the largest number of children receiving intensified support is highest in the Capital region, with the highest PISA scores in 2015, but there is no statistically significant difference in the amount support practices, both intensified and special education support, given in the eastern and western Finnish municipalities, which have lower PISA scores than the Capital region. (Lintuvuori et al., 2017.) In this dissertation, two western and one eastern municipalities organise pupils in comprehensive education in polarised way. As researchers (Lintuvuori et al., 2017.) have pointed out, the way these municipalities organise comprehensive education and support practices is not negative per se; what matters is that individually tailored but equal support practices are given throughout the country with legal protections in mind. It should be added that equal opportunities to access schools and classrooms regardless of the hierarchies of social class matter. Furthermore, if the resources are spared, meaning that there are not enough staff, the staff has not been properly trained and the classrooms are not carefully planned to meet the needs of the children, the municipalities which are here named towards inclusive cannot be called inclusive. Nor can be environment called inclusive, if the pupils are separated or segregated based on attainment.

The risk is that inclusive, optimised education will not turn into a money-saving, low-cost ideology (Lindblad & Popkewizt, 2004; Popkewitz, 1998) despite the government's intent to reduce education spending in a market-driven approach to education. Although more research is needed, it can initially be said that the municipalities in this study do not view costs savings as a rationale for these changes. According to the municipal leaders, they have not saved any money but changed the basis for the allocation of the funding.

Skrtic's adhocracy of inclusive education carries a risk of being viewed as a market mechanism as the value of equity; equity can be interpreted as the right to decision making and choice and the right to seek excellence. It, therefore, is difficult to ensure that the model will lead to the road to inclusion. Standardisation and testing are means for market power to move towards excellence (Ball & Youdell, 2008). Such standardisations have not yet been adopted in Finland, but the importance of PISA scores and other global standardisation practices grows as the education system attempts to adapt to and answer government demands for change.

## 7.2 Parents

### 7.2.1 School choice for children with support needs with reference to Bourdieu

The references to Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital, field and habitus in this dissertation derive from the school choice study tradition. The studies discussed in this dissertation usually refer to Bourdieu's work when considering parental actions or their lack in school choice. Thus, in this study, parents are viewed as having access to fields and moving through fields with the accumulation of capitals. Specifically, this study links to Bourdieu's theories by considering families' socioeconomic status as an indication of capitals. For example, the parents whose children receive support and attend selective classes all have upper-class backgrounds. Hence, they are thought to have certain capitals and consequently the ability to move in the field where choices are exercised. Another link of capital use to socioeconomic class in this research is that mostly parents from upper-class backgrounds feel that schools are important to consider when moving between neighbourhoods. A third link of parents' decision-making to the use of capitals is that the parents want their children to attend schools with friends, creating networks of children with similar parental backgrounds. This social aspect of schooling is important for parents of children with support needs and is often linked to children receiving support, along with the academic aspects of schooling. Hence, the intersection of support needs and class needs to be considered.

As Skeggs (2004) points out, working-class English culture, for instance, has different aspirations than upper-class English culture and therefore different types of capitals. Bourdieu's ideas centre on class theory and give less attention to the intersections of gender, ethnicity and disability. Hence, for example, the importance of friendships for children who receive support can be different for the parents of children who receive less support. As seen in this study, what becomes important for parents across all class backgrounds is that their children with severe support needs receive the support needed regardless of the place. The less severe the support needed is, the more parents' social class plays a similar role as with parents whose children need less support. Hence, in this dissertation, of the few parents whose children (with support needs) are in selective classes, all are upper-class parents who have realised that they are entitled to apply to selective classes. This is by no means simple realisation as one must understand that this right still exists after intensified and special education decisions, which include a decision on a place to study.

In the Swedish case, it has been argued that schools need to market themselves better for all parents to be able to make choices, and in this way, the social class differences in school choice can be diminished. However, those countries that have

fully implemented school choice in practice (e.g. the US, the UK and France) are socially stratified, and schooling reinforces this stratification. The key to equal and equitable education is to maintain a similar organisation of education throughout schools and to implement practices that minimise inequalities, meet support needs, facilitate understanding and collaboration and promote learning of basic subjects at the level of children's ability. No matter how much information about schools is available, if there is choice, some people will not be willing or able to choose. In this case, why should they if the schools throughout the system offer equally good education, instead of individuality and competition?

Although Bourdieu's theories and many school choice theories may help understand the influence of social class on parental power and actions and the educational support needs of their children often remain hidden as these intersections of social class and support needs are often not focussed on.

### 7.2.2 Parental choice by municipal organisation, class and support level needed

The structure of the education system makes it difficult for parents with children needing more support to apply to schools outside their catchment areas. Although the law states that all have the right to apply, special education and intensified education support decisions are made jointly by parents and professionals (Basic Education Act 628/1998, 16. §), implying that the decisions are final, and there is no option to apply (Lempinen et al., 2016). In this study, it can be seen that the parents think the schooling system differently depending on their social class status and the level of support their children need. The parents use strategies allowed by municipalities or within the limits of the municipality's organisation. Furthermore, mostly parents with higher socioeconomic status use application strategies whether or not their children receive more support (as seen in this dissertation; e.g. Kosunen, 2016; Seppänen, 2006; Seppänen et al., 2015), polarising the education system. Studies in other countries show that parents from the upper classes argue for the desired services and schooling (Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). As also seen in this study, their rationales are class dependent; hence, what is important in schooling differs depending on the parents' class and the children's level of disability.

In this study (N=208), most parents (75%) are satisfied with the support they receive and are generally satisfied with the school and classrooms their children attended. A few (n=17) parents are not satisfied with the schools their children attend. These same parents are mostly also unsatisfied with the classrooms that their children attend, although slightly more parents are unsatisfied with the classrooms (n=24) than schools. Though small number of parents were unsatisfied with classrooms,

these numbers could indicate the segmentation of schools (Seppänen et al., 2015), also affecting children who receive more support. The unsatisfied parents represent all types of municipalities (towards inclusive as well as segregated). In addition, the parents feel that they are part of the decisions concerning schooling. Parents' experience of the ability to affect their children's schooling decisions could influence the feeling of satisfaction with the support system and schooling. Hence, a significant component of the support system is the multi-professional board, which work alongside the parents. Working jointly to immediately support children's needs is one advantage of adhocratic, pro-inclusive educational system Skrtic touts. The high rate of satisfaction could also derive from parents' strong belief in the Finnish comprehensive education system.

In this research, the parents generally want their children to attend their neighbourhood schools, but if their children need more support, neighbourhood schools became less important. This trend is also seen in another study in the Finnish context (Klemelä, Rinne & Kivirauma, 2006). The importance of neighbourhood schools recurs throughout the parents' answers, to the point that it can be called a mantra. For instance, in response to questions about the most important aspect of schooling, regardless of the angle of the question, the parents answer that neighbourhood schools are the most important. The parents' interviews (study 1) and open-ended questions (studies 3 and 4) confirm that neighbourhood schools are very important due to the social aspect of education and the daily functioning of children in the neighbourhood where they live.

Another interesting finding in this dissertation is that the children in studies 3 and 4 are assigned to schools based on the level of support and not socioeconomic class. In contrast, an earlier Finnish study finds that the parents of children receiving special support in a segregated environment are mostly from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Klemelä et al., 2006). This finding is not reproduced for two reasons. First, with a larger number of participants, there could have been statistical significance for socioeconomic class and allocation to certain the classroom. Second, most participants in studies 3 and 4 are from municipalities using inclusive strategies of optimising children to classrooms, which could decrease socioeconomic segregation by mixing the area population.

Overall, there are many differences in how the municipalities organise special education and where the pupils with more support needs are assigned and taught. Especially in municipalities D and F, education is polarised, and many pupils with support needs are taught in different places than their peers with higher socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as in segregated institutions and classrooms. Other municipalities

have taken a more inclusive approach teaching pupils in regular settings to a larger extent. If parents are mostly satisfied what the organisation of education offered by municipalities, it is as the bigger picture is not visible. We can assume that the parents are satisfied as they are heard, and the educational support services are good; however, the parents do not see the varied organisation of municipalities and trust that the system is equal.

## 7.3    Main findings

In this section, the main findings are listed.

a)      The municipalities are polarised in how they organise comprehensive education, the way they interpret education laws and which paradigms (e.g. freedom of choice, inclusive) they are to follow.

b)      Municipalities are polarised in how they organise comprehensive education, the way they apply the catchment area principle and how they use selective classes, special education and parental choice. Consequently, the schools are simultaneously polarising (study 2) and segmenting.

c)      The municipalities that organise each school in its own catchment area tend to both have selective classes in schools and to use segregated special-education schools. These long-established municipalities are classified as traditional, segregated municipalities

d)      In traditional, segregated municipalities, neighbourhood schools are truly neighbourhood schools, meaning that they are the nearest school to students' homes. Furthermore, these municipalities use highly selective classes and special education institutions which can be located anywhere in the city, so children's school paths have the potential to be polarised.

e)      Municipalities with larger catchment areas with many schools called neighbourhood schools use optimisation of pupils to classrooms as an allocation strategy. In these municipalities, the area principle has much influence over student allocation. These municipalities have few emphasized classrooms and no special education institutions and optimise children to classrooms according to inclusive principles. However, in these municipalities, *neighbourhood school* refers to a variety of schools, giving the process a false name, although the end practice might be to be inclusive.

f)    Most parents want their children in neighbourhood schools and are happy with their children's support and classroom allocation. The parents feel they can influence their children's schooling.

g)    Many parents might not be aware of this neighbourhood school dilemma as they simply want their children in neighbourhood schools and are content with the status quo.

h)    In line with previous research findings (see e.g. Kosunen, 2016), the parents whose children receive more support and use choosing strategies are from the upper classes, and although they use these strategies much less than their peers whose children do not receive extensive support.

In conclusion,

a)    Finland has a segmenting comprehensive education system. There is no longer a dual special and general education system but a much more complex organisation of comprehensive education.

b)    In the Finnish education system, social segregation through education is growing more in some municipalities than others.

c)    Segregation and segmentation of the education system are due to the reorganisation and reforms of the education system that are acts of governance (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004). If the system lets parents use choice strategies, those who do are usually from the upper classes, including the parents of children who receive support.

## 7.4    Conclusions from the discussion and further developments

It can be concluded that some municipalities organise comprehensive education in a way that polarises children's school paths according to their intensified or special support needs or socioeconomic status. In contrast, other municipalities organise comprehensive education in more inclusive ways so that children are assigned to classrooms on an equal basis rather than parental choice. Municipalities can therefore increase or decrease the use of school choice, thereby school choice markets (see also Varjo & Kalalahti, 2016).

The upper-class parents of children who receive support use similar strategies, although to a lesser extent than upper-class parents whose children do not receive support. This implies that the polarisation of schools could further segregate social

classes from one another, including those whose children receive support. In other words, those with lower socioeconomic status and more support measures could be segregated and concentrated in certain schools.

Neighbourhood schools are important to parents. However, in municipalities with few catchment areas and optimisation policies, the neighbourhood school could be, for instance, one of five schools. This type of organisation allows much decentralised power in optimising children to classrooms.

Municipalities organise education and special education in different ways: traditional, segregated and polarised, and inclusive. Those that tend towards inclusivity have the most in common with Skrtic's adhocracy, an organisation that offers flexible support for pupils and does not require much bureaucracy. In this type of organisation, the pupils work together despite differences and consider problems together, with many teachers and professionals working together closely. In contrast, the Finnish system is quite bureaucratic, particularly its decision-making process for support measures. Bureaucracies, though, have less influence on the allocation policies in municipalities that use optimisation of pupils.

The foremost question is whether, if the children of mostly upper-class parents leave neighbourhood schools or concentrate in selective classes, others will remain in neighbourhood schools. This would result in a flipped effect opposite that of the former education system, in which special support was received outside neighbourhood schools, and regular support was received in neighbourhood schools. Is the Finnish comprehensive education system moving towards a schooling system which contributes heavily to social class reproduction?

The contributions of this dissertation are to take into account the parental school choices for children with support needs. These families usually are not included in school choice studies. Furthermore, this research applies the policy-to-practice approach, showing how the structures of school choice and comprehensive education organisation can contribute to the inclusion and exclusion of children with support needs. The dual framework of Skrtic's theory and school space research has not previously been used in the Finnish context. In practice, this dissertation reveals the flipped effect of other pupils staying and those with higher socioeconomic status choosing non-neighbourhood schools. It is very important to consider these matters in more depth, looking at the whole education system, as well as going into more detail about practices. For example, future research could examine how the practices in these different municipalities work and how parents understand the meaning of neighbourhood schools. It could also be productive to compare more neoliberal education systems and the Finnish education system to understand the state of the structures at this time.

This dissertation could be used to understand and justify more inclusive municipal politics. One of the basic education directors indicated that it is not quite possible to successfully use inclusive measures in municipalities, this director was from one of the more segregative municipalities. This dissertation can be send to this director as well as other municipal directors and municipal boards to spark the conversation of towards more inclusive measures. Although, previous research has indicated of different ways to organize education in municipalities (e.g. Seppänen et al., 2015; Varjo & Kalalahti 2016), the studies have considered large Finnish cities. In addition, special education has not been considered to great extent. What this dissertation brings, is an understanding of how basic education is organized also in smaller municipalities and it also considers special education measures.

The organisation of comprehensive education should be unified to protect those who cannot choose—protected not with market mechanism but with equal opportunities, which do not require aptitude tests. The aim of education should encompass a notion of teaching and learning not only academic subjects but also how to become citizens who respect one another despite different backgrounds. The government should eliminate the structures of social segregation in schools, as when parents are given opportunity to choose freely, those who can choose will (see Slee, 2011), and the rest of the pupils will stay. It is the education structures and the organisation that enable parents to choose. Now is the time to stop this developing segregation.

# 8.  REFERENCES

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# 9.   APPENDICES

**Appedix 1.**

Article 1. Towards inclusive schooling policies in Finland: a multiple-case study from policy to practice (see Pdf)

**Appendix 2.**

Article 2. Inkluusion ja kouluvalinnan dilemma – Oppilaan tuen taso ja yläkoulujen oppilaaksiotto Turussa (see Pdf)

**Appendix 3.**

Article 3. Special support and neighbourhood school allocation in Finland: a study on parental school choice (see Pdf)

**Appendix 4.**

Article 4. (Submitted) Educational support and school choice in Finland: Who should decide where my child is schooled? (see below)

**Appendix 5.**

Request for interview and interview questions for article 1. (see below)

**Appendix 6.**

Request for interview and questionnaire for article 3 & 4 (see Pdf)

**Appendix 7.**

Positively reviewed research plan from Ethical Board of University of Turku (see pdf)

**Appendix 5. 1) Request for interview and 2) interview questions for Article 1.**

# 1) Request for the Interview

Hyvät (xxxxxxx Lasten Vanhemmat) Opettajat,

Olen aloittanut pro gradu –tutkielman aiheenani erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevien lasten integroituminen luokkayhteisöön. Pro gradu -tutkielmani tavoitteena on tutkia, miten entiset xxxxx oppilaat ovat sopeutuneet uusiin ryhmiinsä. Tutkimuksessani on tarkoitus tarkastella lasten, vanhempien ja opettajien ajatuksia, toiveita ja arkea nykyhetkellä peilaten sitä integroituun pienryhmään vuosi sitten. Tutkimuksessa tarvittavat tiedot on tarkoitus hankkia haastattelemalla entisen xxxxx erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevia lapsia, heidän vanhempiaan, sekä opettajia, avustajia ja erityisopettajia. Tutkimuksen merkittävyys ilmenee siten, että tämän tyyppisiä tutkimuksia lapsen näkökulmasta on Suomessa tehty melko vähän. Tutkimukseni tulokset ovat tutkittavien käytettävissä tutkielman valmistuttua.

Voisitteko te ja lapsenne osallistua tutkimukseeni? Haastattelun kesto on n. 30-45 minuuttia (aikuinen) teille sopivana ajankohtana. Lasten haastattelut kestävät n. 15 minuuttia ja haastattelu voidaan tehdä koulussa/päiväkodissa. Tutkimuksessa noudatetaan hyvää tieteellistä käytäntöä ja etiikkaa. Tutkimuksen yksittäisiä henkilöitä ei voida tunnistaa tutkimuksesta. Osallistuminen tutkimukseen on vapaaehtoista.

Tarkoituksena olisi järjestää haastattelut tämän kevään aikana. Pyytäisin teitä ilmoittamaan osallistumisestanne sähköpostitse (somale@utu.fi) tai puhelimitse, (0400736488) 1. 5. mennessä.

Vastaamme ja autamme mielellämme, jos teille tulee kysymyksiä haastatteluun tai tutkimukseen liittyen.

Ystävällisin terveisin,
Sonia Lempinen
Master's Degree Programme in Learning,
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Systems (LLEES)
Kasvatustieteen laitos
Turun yliopisto
Puh: 0400736488
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# 2) Interview questions

Preliminary interview questions (core questions for the interview)
Teachers and assistants

## Background questions

1.  How many years have you been working?
    *Kuinka monta vuotta olet työskennellyt opetusalalla?*

2.  What kind of training did you have?
    *Kuvailisitko koulutustasi?*

## Macro questions

3.  What does inclusion mean to you?
    *Miten ymmärrät inkluusion? Mitä inkluusiolla tarkoitetaan?*

4.  How have the changes in early childhood education (Lappeenranta region) affected your work? (note to self: explain changes eg. Peripheral special education teachers, special needs children put in general groups with typically developed children)
    *Miten viime aikaiset muutokset erityisopetuksessa ovat vaikuttaneet sinun työhösi konkreettisesti? (muutoksilla tarkoitan esimerkiksi, kiertäviä erityisopettajia, lähikouluperiaatetta tai muu)*

5.  What do you think about these changes?
    *Mitä mieltä olet näistä muutoksista?*

6.  Would you like to change something concerning special education with special emphasis on different types of groups?
    *Jos saisit päättää, miten sinä muuttaisit erityisopetusta, erityisesti ryhmien kannalta?*

7.  What is the role of a school in the life of these children? (Note to self: academic, social skills…)
    *Mikä on koulun merkitys/ tehtävä lasten elämässä (erityisesti erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevien lasten elämässä?)*

8.  What makes a beneficial setting to especially special education children?
    *Millaisia asioita pidät tärkeänä luokkaympäristössä, erityisesti erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevan lapsen kehityksen tukemista ajatellen?*

9.   How would you describe ideal parental involvement and compare it to real life setting?

   *Kuvaile vanhempien osallistumista erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevien lasten koulun käyntiin todellisuudessa ja vertaa sitä idealistiseen tilanteeseen.*

**Micro questions**

10.  How would you describe your classroom?
   *Miten kuvailisit luokkaasi/ryhmääsi?*

11.  How do you feel in this classroom in general?
   *Miltä sinusta tuntuu opettaa/olla tässä luokassa?*

12.  Do you use inclusive practices in your classroom and if so then please describe.
   *Muuttuuko opetustekniikka kun luokassa on erityisen tuen tarpeessa oleva lapsi? Jos muuttuu niin miten?*

13.  What kind of group setting is most beneficial for special education children?
   *Millainen ryhmä asetelma toimii mielestäsi parhaiten eritysen tuen lasten kannalta?*

14.  Do you think that there should be workshops or other training on this topic (for example how to apply it in your classroom)? What kind of training would you like?
   *Olisiko sinusta tarpeellista tarjota lisäkoulutus mahdollisuuksia aiheesta inkluusio/integraatio/erityisen tuen lapsen perusopetuksen parissa? Jos kyllä, millaista koulutusta?*

**Child specific questions**

15.  What is the diagnosis of this child and what is your opinion on this?
   *Mikä on tämän kyseisen lapsen diagnoosi? Mikä on mielipiteesi diagnoosista?*

16.  How does the diagnosis effect the education of this child?
   *Miten tämä diagnoosi vaikuttaa lapsen opetukseen? Onko diagnoosi tarpeellinen opetuksen kannalta?*

17.  Is the diagnosis necessary to have in terms of the child's education?
   *Onko diagnoosi tarpeellinen opetuksen kannalta?*

18.  How would you describe the development of this child during the past year?
   *Kuvailisitko lapsen kehitystä viime vuoden aikana.*

19.     How has the child fitted to this group?
        *Miten lapsi on otettu vastaan tähän ryhmään?*

20.     Friends?
        *Ystävät?*

21.     Describe the child's academic achievement.
        *Miten lapsi on suoriutunut akateemisesti vuodesta?*

22.     Could you describe methods which you use in teaching in order support this child's needs?
        *Keroisitko opetustekniikoista, jotka auttavat kyseisen lapsen opetuksessa?*

23.     How do these methods vary from the ones you use in general?
        *Eroavatko kyseisen lapsen opetuksessa käytettävät opetustekniikat muista luokassa käytettävistä opetustekniikoista?*

24.     What kind of aid/s (if any) does the child need in order to support the child's development?
        *Millaisia apukeinoja lapsen opetukseen on käytettävissä? (apuväline, avustaja, materiaalit)*

25.     Do you think this group is most beneficial for the child or would you change something?
        *Onko tämä ryhmä mielestäsi toimivin lapsen kannalta vai sijoittaisitko lapsen muuhun ryhmään? Jos kyllä, millaiseen?*

26.     Future? (in terms of e.g. groups, support )
        *Millaisena näet lapsen tuleviasuuden opetuksen sekä ryhmien kannalta? Toiveita, murheita?*

## Parents

### Background questions

1.      What do you remember from last year?
        *Millaisia muistoja sinulla on Tarinametsästä vuodesta?*

2.      How did you find the group setting (many teachers, little children)?
        *Miten koit opetusympäristön Tarinametsässä? (lasten/ aikuisten määrä?)*

3.      What would you like the school to teach your child?
        *Mitä haluasit koulun opettavan lapsellesi?*

**Macro questions**

4. How have the changes in early childhood education (Lappeenranta region) affected your work? (note to self: explain changes eg. Peripheral special education teachers, special needs children put in general groups with typically developed children)

   *Miten viime aikaiset muutokset erityisopetuksessa ovat vaikuttaneet lapsenne tarhassa/koulun käyntiin konkreettisesti? (muutoksilla tarkoitan esimerkiksi, kiertäviä erityisopettajia, lähikouluperiaatetta tai muu)*

5. What do you think about these changes?

   *Mitä mieltä olet näistä muutoksista?*

6. Would you like to change something concerning special education with special emphasis on different types of groups?

   *Jos saisit päättää, miten sinä muuttaisit erityisopetusta, erityisesti ryhmien kannalta?*

7. What is the role of a school in the life of these children? (Note to self: academic, social skills…)

   *Mikä on koulun merkitys/ tehtävä lasten elämässä ?*

8. What makes a beneficial setting to especially special education children?

   *Millaisia asioita pidät tärkeänä luokkaympäristössä, erityisesti erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevan lapsen kehityksen tukemista ajatellen?*

9. Describe ideal parental involvement.

   *Miten vanhempien tulisi osallistua erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevien lasten koulun käyntiin?*

**Micro questions (Child specific questions)**

10. What is the diagnosis of this child and what is your opinion on this?

    *Mikä on tämän kyseisen lapsen diagnoosi? Mikä on mielipiteesi diagnoosista?*

11. How does the diagnosis effect the education of this child?

    *Miten tämä diagnoosi vaikuttaa lapsen opetukseen? Onko diagnoosi tarpeellinen opetuksen kannalta?*

12. Describe how did changing groups affect the child?

    *Miten ryhmän vaihto on sujunut ja miten se on vaikuttanut lapseen?*

13. How would you describe the development of this child during the past year?
    *Kuvailisitko lapsen kehitystä viime vuoden aikana.*

14. How has the child fitted to this group?
    *Miten lapsi on otettu vastaan tähän ryhmään?*

15. Friends?
    *Ystävät?*

16. Describe the child's academic achievement.
    *Miten lapsi on suoriutunut akateemisesti vuodesta?*

17. What kind of aid (if any) does the child need in order to support the child's development?
    *Millaisia apukeinoja lapsen opetukseen on käytettävissä? (apuväline, avustaja, materiaalit)*

18. Do you think this group is most beneficial for the child or would you change something?
    *Onko tämä ryhmä mielestäsi toimivin lapsen kannalta vai sijoittaisitko lapsen muuhun ryhmään? Jos kyllä, millaiseen?*

19. Would you like to change something concerning special education?
    *Jos saisit päättä, miten sinä muuttaisit erityisopetusta, sekä erityisryhmiä?*

20. Future? (in terms of e.g. groups, support )
    *Millaisena näet lapsen tuleviasuuden opetuksen sekä ryhmien kannalta? Toiveita, murheita?*

## The Child

"Could I interview you? I am trying to find out which groups work for children best. I have a recorder so that I will record what you are saying so that I can remember it later."

*"Saanko haastatella sinua? Yritän selvittää miten lapset viihtyvät erilaisissa ryhmissä ja haluaisin kysyä mielipidettäsi muutamasta asiasta siihen liittyen. Minulla on nauhuri mukana, jotta voita sitten myohemmin muistaa mistä keskusteltiin."*

**Back ground questions**

1. How old are you and what is your favourite colour?
   *Kerrotko kuinka vanha olet ja mikä on lempivärisi?*

2.  How has it been in your new class?
    *Mitä tänne uuteen luokkaan kuuluu?*

3.  What is it like to be here?
    *Millaista täällä on olla?*

4.  What kind of day care groups have you been in?
    *Millaisissa tarharyhmissä olet ollut?*

5.  What do you remember about them?
    *Mitä niistä on jäänyt mieleen?*

6.  Where did you like going and why?
    *Missä oli mukavinta ja mikä siitä teki mukavaa/ei ollut mukavaa?*

7.  Do you remember what was it like in Tarinametsä? What did you like there and what did you not like there?
    *Muisteletko Tarinametsää joskus? Mikä siellä oli kivaa? Entäs mistä et tykänny?*

8.  What did it feel like to have many adults, as we had there and what do you think about having teachers now?
    *Miltä tuntui kun oli monta aikuista verratuna nykyiseen?*

9.  What is it like being in this group compared to Tarinametsä?
    *Millasta on olla tässä ryhmässä, miten se eroaa Tarinametsästä?*

10. What is important to you in the classroom?
    *Mikä on sinulle tärkeää luokassa/ tarhassa?*

11. If you could deside what kind of classroom would you have, what and who would be in it? Not be?
    *Jos saisit päättää millaisessa luokassa/tarharyhmässä haluaisit olla, kuka siellä olisi ja mitä siellä olisi?Ei olisi?*

12. What kind of friends do you have now and then, any from other classes?
    *Millaisia kavereita sinulla on nyt, entä silloin? Onko kavereita muilta luokilta?*

13. What is it like to be in a classroom with lots of children? Little children?
    *Millaista on olla luokassa missä on paljon/vähän lapsia?*

14. What helps you learn?
    *Mikä auttaa sinua oppimaan?*

15. What would you like to learn in school?
    *Mitä haluaisit oppia koulussa?*

**Appendix 6. Kouluvalintakysely 2014.**

# Kouluvalintakysely 2014

Hyvä 1. luokkalaisen huoltaja,

Kouluun siirtyminen on uusi ja jännittävä tapahtuma koko perheelle. Ennen kouluun siirtymistä on tehtävä tärkeä valinta lapsen koulusta. Koulujen valintaan vaikuttavat monet tekijät joiden suhdetta tutkin tässä Turun yliopiston kasvatustieteen laitokselle tehtävässä väitöskirjassani. Väitöskirjatutkimukseni "Vanhempien kouluvalinta; erityisen ja tehostetun tuen näkökulmasta" on Turun yliopiston rahoittama tutkimus, jonka ohjaajina toimivat Professori Joel Kivirauma ja Dosentti Päivi Pihlaja. Tarkoitukseni tämän kyselytutkimuksen lisäksi on haastatella vanhempia lapsen kouluvalintoihin liittyvissä kysymyksissä. Mikäli haluat osallistua haastatteluun, voit jättää yhteystietosi lomakkeen lopussa.

Pyydän Teitä vastaamaan kouluvalintoihin ja perhetaustoihin liittyviin kysymyksiin 15.10. 2014 mennessä. Kyselyyn vastaaminen kestää n.20 minuuttia. Lomake täytetään osoitteessa:https://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/27CA9B01D3F28851.par Painamalla lähetä-painiketta vastaukset lähetetään automaattisesti. Jos haluatte keskeyttää ja jatkaa myöhemmin, voitte painaa keskeytä- painiketta, jolloin aukeaa sivu josta saatte linkin jossa voitte jatkaa kyselyn täyttämistä myöhemmin. Paperilomaketta käyttäessänne voitte lähettää vastauksenne vastauskuoressa (postimaksu maksettu).

Vastauksenne käsitellään luottamuksellisesti. Koulut tai opetusviranomaiset eivät saa tietoja käyttöönsä missään vaiheessa. Tuloksia käsitellään niin, että yksittäisiä henkilöitä ei voida julkaisuista tunnistaa. Tulokset säilytetään ja arkistoidaan Turun yliopistolla mahdollisten muutosten vertailemiseksi. Kyselyyn vastaaminen on vapaaehtoista. Jokainen vastaus on erittäin tärkeä. Mikäli teille tulee kysymyksiä tutkimukseen liittyen, vastaan mielelläni.

Yhteistyöstä etukäteen kiittäen,

_____
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## Taustakysymykset (lapsi)

**Toinen huoltajista voi täyttää lomakkeen ja vastata perheeseen kuuluvien puolesta.**

Kysely koskee lapsen kouluun siirtymistä.

**1.** Kyselylomakkeen täyttäjä on lapsen:

☐ äiti

☐ isä

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

**2.** Päivähoitopaikan nimi jossa lapsenne oli ennen siirtymistä 1. luokalle?

[text area]

**3.** Koulun nimi jossa lapsenne on juuri aloittanut syksyllä 2014?

[text area]

200 merkkiä jäljellä

**4.** Lapsen ikä: syntymävuosi (esimerkiksi, 2006) ja syntymäkuukausi (esimerkiksi, tammikuu)

**syntymävuosi**

☐ 2005

☐ 2006

☐ 2007

☐ 2008

☐ 2009

☐ muu [_____]

**syntymäkuukausi**

☐ tammikuu

☐ helmikuu

☐ maaliskuu

☐ huhtikuu

☐ toukokuu

☐ kesäkuu

☐ heinäkuu

☐ elokuu

☐ syyskuu

☐ lokakuu

☐ marraskuu

☐ joulukuu

**5.** Lapsenne sukupuoli:

○ tyttö

○ poika

**6.** Saiko lapsenne esiopetuksessa:

**Yleistä tukea** annetaan omassa luokassa kaikille oppilaille ennaltaehkäisevästi. Yleiseen tukeen kuuluu mm. monipuolista ohjausta, sekä tarvittaessa tilapäistä tukiopetusta ja tilapäistä erityisopetusta.
**Tehostettua tukea** annetaan oppilaille jotka tarvitsevat yksilöllisempää ja laajempaa tukea jota yleensä antaa erityisopettaja. Kaikille tehostetun tuen oppilaille tehdään oppimissuunnitelma. Jos tehostettu tuki ei riitä, oppilaan tilanteesta laaditaan pedagoginen selvitys yhdessä opettajien ja oppilashuollon kanssa. Selvityksen pohjalta tehdään päätös **erityisen tuen** aloittamisesta. Kaikille erityisen tuen oppilaille tehdään HOJKS.

○ erityistä tukea

○ tehostettua tukea

○ yleistä tukea

○ ei saanut

○ en tiedä

**7.** Saako lapsenne nyt koulussa:

Valitkaa yksi vaihtoehto.

○ erityistä tukea

○ tehostettua tukea

○ ei saa

○ en tiedä

**8.** Opiskeleeko lapsenne nyt:

○ kokonaan tavallisella luokalla

○ osan ajasta erityisopettajan ryhmässä

○ erityisluokalla

○ en tiedä

**9.** Onko lapsellanne nyt koulussa henkilökohtaista avustajaa?

○ kyllä

○ kyllä, mielestäni hän tarvitsee sitä

○ kyllä, mutta mielestäni hän ei tarvitse henkilökohtaista avustajaa

○ ei

○ ei, eikä hän mielestäni tarvitse henkilökohtaista avustajaa

○ ei, mutta mielestäni hän tarvitsee henkilökohtaisen avustajan

○ en tiedä

**10.** Mihin alla olevista ryhmistä lapsenne erityisen tuen tarpeet sijoittuvat?

☐ oppimisvaikeudet (esim. kielteoppimisvaikeudet, lukemisen vaikeus)

☐ kielen kehityksen erityisvaikeus (esim. dyspraxia)

☐ sosiaaliset- ja tunne-elämän vaikeudet (esim. vaikeus kaverisuhteissa, tunteiden ilmaisu)

☐ tarkkaavaisuushäiriö (esim. ADD, ADHD)

☐ lievä kehitysviivästymä

☐ liikuntavamma

☐ näkövamma

☐ kuulovamma

☐ kehitysvamma (laaja-alainen kehitysviivästymä)

☐ autismin spektri (esim. autismi tai aspergerin syndrooma)

☐ pitkäaikainen krooninen sairaus [_____]

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

☐ tutkimukset ovat kesken

☐ en tiedä tai osaa sanoa

**11.** Kuinka paljon arvioisitte lapsenne tarvitsevan tukea?

○ vähän

○ jonkin verran

○ paljon

○ en osaa sanoa

# Kysymyksiä kouluvalinnasta

**12.** Oletteko tyytyväisiä valittuun kouluun ja jos mahdollista kertokaa mihin olitte tai ette olleet tyytyväisiä?

○ kyllä

○ ei

**13.** Oletteko tyytyväisiä valittuun luokkaan?

○ kyllä

○ ei

**14.** Miten lapsenne koulu valittiin?

☐ Päätös tehtiin koulun/kunnan puolelta

☐ Päätös tehtiin yhdessä (koulu/muu taho yhdessä huoltajien kanssa)

☐ Vanhemmat valitsivat

☐ Vanhemmat ja lapset valitsivat yhdessä

**15.** Tuntuiko teistä että vaikutitte kouluvalintaan?

○ Kyllä

○ Kyllä, mutta se ei ollut helppoa (miksi?)

○ Ei

○ Ei, (miksi?)

○ Ei, en halunnut vaikuttaa

**16.** Jos vastasitte edelliseen kysymykseen ei, mikä vaikutti siihen, että ette voineet vaikuttaa?

☐ Teiltä ei kysytty mielipidettä lapsen kouluvalintaan

☐ Teidän mielipidettänne ei kuunneltu, vaikka tehtiikin yhteistyötä valintaprosessin aikana

☐ Jokin muu syy, mikä

**17.** Millä tahoilla oli mielestänne suurin vaikutus kouluvalintapäätöksessä? (Valitkaa tarvittava määrä tahoja)

☐ lapsi

☐ päiväkodin johtaja

☐ esiopettaja

☐ erityislastentarhanopettaja

☐ nykyisen koulun rehtori

☐ nykyisen koulun opettaja

☐ nykyisen luokan erityisopettaja

☐ lääkäri

☐ psykologi

☐ kuntoutusohjaaja

☐ vanhemmat/huoltajat

☐ isovanhemmat

☐ alue rehtori

☐ joku muu, mikä [_____]

**18.** Onko lapsenne syksyllä 2014 aloittama koulu lähikoulu (lähikoulu: kaupungin määrittämällä oppilaaksiottoalueilla oleva koulu, joka on asuinalueenne lähikoulu, mutta ei välttämättä maantieteellisesti lähin koulu)?

○ kyllä

○ ei

○ en tiedä

**19.** Oletteko hakeneet paikkaa jostain muusta, kuin osoitetusta koulusta?

○ Ei

○ Kyllä (mihin kouluun aiotte hakea/haitte)? [_____]

**20.**
Miten paljon alla listatut asiat vaikuttivat mielipiteeseenne nykyisen koulun valintaa pohtiessa?

|  | Vaikutti paljon | Vaikutti vähän | Ei vaikuttanut lainkaan |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. päiväkodin johtaja | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. esiopettaja | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. erityislastentarhanopettaja | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. nykyisen koulun rehtori | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. nykyinen luokanopettaja | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. nykyinen erityisopettaja | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. lääkäri | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. psykologi | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. kuntoutusohjaaja | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10. koulutusalalla olevien tuttavien mielipide | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. positiivinen kuva koulusta, tuttavien kertomusten pohjalta | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 12. lapseni mielipide koulusta | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. koulutuksestani oli hyötyä kouluvalinta päätöksessä | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. koulun maine | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. opetustarjonta | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 16. tietynlainen luokka (esim. tavallinen luokka, pienluokka) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. erityisopetustarjonta | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. jokin muu, mikä? | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**21.** Edellisessä kohdassa (20.) teitä pyydettiin arvioimaan mikä vaikutti mielipiteeseenne koulun valintaa pohtiessa. Pyytäisin teitä nyt valitsemaan eniten vaikuttaneet ja asettamaan ne järjestykseen (tärkein, toiseksi tärkein, kolmanneksi tärkein). Voitte kirjoittaa kohtaa luettolossa kohtaa vastaavan numeron alla olevaan avoimeen kenttään (esim. 8. joka vastaa psykologia)

Tärkein

Toiseksi tärkein

Kolmanneksi tärkein

**22.** Kuinka tärkeänä pidätte lapsenne kannalta alla olevista väittämistä?

Lapsen kannalta on tärkeää että...

| | Erittäin tärkeää | Tärkeää | Jokseenkin tärkeää | Ei ollenkaan tärkeää | En osaa sanoa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. koulu on lähikoulu | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. hän käy tavallisella luokkalla | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. hän käy erityisluokkaa | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. hän käy pienluokkaa | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. hän saa erityisopetusta | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. koulussa on hyvä työrauha | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. koulussa on hyvä kasvatus | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. luokassa on hyvä opetuksen laatu | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. on hyvä opettaja | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. opettajan kanssa yhteistyö on sujuva | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. koulumatka on turvallinen | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 12. luokalla on lapsia jotka eivät tarvitse tukea | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. luokalla on erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevia olevia lapsia | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. lapseni ei leimaannu | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. luokassa on lapsia joilla on samanlainen tuen tarve | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 16. lapseni luokalla on vähän lapsia | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. hän käy samaa koulua kun kaverinsa | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. hän käy samaa koulua kun sisaruksensa | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. … jokin muu, mikä | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**23.** Edellisessä kohdassa (22.) teitä pyydettiin arvioimaan kuinka tärkeitä väittämät ovat kouluvalinnan kannalta. Pyytäisin teitä nyt valitsemaan väittämistä tärkeimmät ja asettamaan ne järjestykseen (tärkein, toiseksi tärkein, kolmanneksti tärkein).

Voitte kirjoittaa ylläolevasta luettelosta kohtaa vastaavan numeron alla olevaan avoimeen kenttään.

tärkein

toiseksi tärkein

kolmanneksi tärkein

# Perheen taustatietoja

Seuraavassa kohdassa tiedustellaan perheen taustatietoja, kohtaan A) merkitään lapsen äidin tai muun huoltajan tiedot, ja kohtaan B) lapsen isän tai muun huoltajan tiedot

**24.** A) Lapsen äidin tai muun huoltajan tiedot:

Kohdassa A) kysytään äitiin tai muuhun huoltajaan liittyviä tietoja, ja kohdassa B) isään tai muuhun huoltajaan liittyviä tietoja.

○ Äiti

○ muu huoltaja, mikä?

**25.** A) Äiti tai muu huoltaja on:

153

○ yksinhuoltaja

○ puolisoni on yksinhuoltaja

○ meillä on yhteishuoltajuus (asumme yhdessä)

○ meillä on yhteishuoltajuus (emme asu yhdessä)

○ muu huoltajuus muoto, mikä [                    ]

**26.** Ikä (vuosina):

(v) [                ]

**27.** Äidinkieli:

[                                        ]

**28.** A) Onko äiti tai muu huoltaja lapsen biologinen vanhempi?

○ kyllä

○ ei

**29.** A) Korkein suoritettu kouluaste

○ kansakoulu

○ peruskoulu

○ keskikoulu

○ lukio

○ ammattikoulu

○ opisto

○ ammattikorkeakoulu

○ yliopisto

○ akateeminen jatkotutkinto

○ tutkinto on kesken, mikä [                    ]

○ muu, mikä [                    ]

**30.** A) Sai koulussa erityisopetusta:

○ kyllä

○ ei

**31.** A) Jos vastaus on edelliseen kysymykseen on kyllä, millainen erityisopetus oli?

○ olin erityisluokalla

○ sain osa-aikaista erityisopetusta

○ en saanut

○ muu, mikä [                                        ]

○ en tiedä

**32.** A) Ammattinimike (tällä hetkellä)

50 merkkiä jäljellä

**33.** A) Työsuhteen kesto:

○ vakinainen

○ määräaikainen

○ ei työsuhteessa

○ muu, mikä? [              ]

**34.** A) Työsuhteen luonne:

○ kokopäivä (esim. 8-16)

○ osa-aikatyö (alle 30 tuntia viikossa)

○ keikkatyö (silloin tällöin tai lyhyt kestoinen työsuhde)

○ vuorotyö (1,2 tai 3 vuorotyö)

○ yrittäjä

○ ei työsuhteessa

○ muu, mikä? [              ]

**35.** A) Äidin tai muun huoltajan vuositulot ennen veroja (bruttotulot):

○ alle 10 000

○ 10 000 - 19 999

○ 20 000 - 29 999

○ 30 000 - 39 999

○ 40 000 - 49 999

○ 50 000 - 59 999

○ 60 000 - 69 999

○ 70 000 - 79 999

○ 80 000 - 89 999

○ yli 90 000

**36.** B) Lapsen isän tai muun huoltajan tiedot:

○ Isä

○ muu huoltaja, mikä? [                    ]

**37.** B) Isä tai muu huoltaja on:

○ yksinhuoltaja

○ puolisoni on yksinhuoltaja

○ meillä on yhteishuoltajuus (asuu yhdessä)

○ meillä on yhteishuoltajuus (emme asu yhdessä)

○ muu huoltajuus muoto, mikä [                    ]

**38.** Ikä (vuosina):

(v) [                    ]

**39.** Äidinkieli:

[                                        ]

**40.** B) Onko isä tai muu huoltaja lapsen biologinen vanhempi?

○ kyllä

○ ei

**41.** B) Korkein suoritettu kouluaste:

○ kansakoulu

○ peruskoulu

○ keskikoulu

○ lukio

○ ammattikoulu

○ opisto

○ ammattikorkeakoulu

○ yliopisto

○ akateeminen jatkotutkinto

○ tutkinto on kesken, mikä [                    ]

## 42. B) Sai peruskoulussa erityisopetusta:

B) Saitteko peruskoulussa erityisopetusta?

○ kyllä

○ ei

○ en tiedä

## 43. B) Jos vastaus edelliseen kysymykseen oli kyllä, millainen erityisopetus oli?

○ hän oli erityisluokalla

○ hän sai osa-aikaista erityisopetusta

○ en saanut

○ muu, mikä [                    ]

○ en tiedä

## 44. B) Ammattinimike (tällä hetkellä)

50 merkkiä jäljellä

## 45. B) Työsuhteen kesto:

○ vakinainen

○ määräaikainen

○ ei työsuhteessa

  jokin muu,

○ mikä [                    ]

**46.** B) Työsuhteen luonne:

○ kokopäivä (esim. 8-16)

○ osa-aikatyö (alle 30 tuntia viikossa)

○ keikkatyö (silloin tällöin tai lyhyt kestoinen työsuhde)

○ vuorotyö (1,2 tai 3 vuorotyö)

○ yrittäjä

○ ei työsuhteessa

○ muu, mikä? [                    ]

**47.** B) Isän tai muun huoltajan vuositulot ennen veroja (bruttotulot):

○ alle 10 000

○ 10 000 - 19 999

○ 20 000 - 29 999

○ 30 000 - 39 999

○ 40 000 - 49 999

○ 50 000 - 59 999

○ 60 000 - 69 999

○ 70 000 - 79 999

○ 80 000 - 89 999

○ yli 90 000

# Lisätietoja vanhemmista

**48.** Asuuko jompikumpi tai kumpikin lapsen huoltajista eri osoitteessa kuin missä lapsi asuu?

☐ kyllä, lapsen äiti asuu eri osoitteessa

☐ kyllä, lapsen isä asuu eri osoitteessa

☐ ei

☐ en tiedä

**49.** Keitä kuuluu lapsen äidin talouteen?

☐ äiti

☐ isä

☐ sisarukset

☐ isäpuoli

☐ äitipuoli

☐ äidin avopuoliso

☐ isän avopuoliso

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

☐ en tiedä

**50.** Äidin talouteen kuuluvan toisen aikuisen ammattinimike?

[text area]

**51.** Keitä kuuluu lapsen isän talouteen?

☐ äiti

☐ isä

☐ sisarukset

☐ isäpuoli

☐ äitipuoli

☐ äidin avopuoliso

☐ isän avopuoliso

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

☐ muu, mikä [_____]

☐ en tiedä

**52.** Isän talouteen kuuluvan toisen aikuisen ammattinimike?

[text area]

**53.** Asuuko lapsesi jonkun sisaruksen kanssa samassa taloudessa? (myös puolisisarukset otetaan

huomioon)

☐ Ei

**Nuorempia sisaruksia (kpl)**

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ enemmän kuin 5

**Vanhempia sisaruksia (kpl)**

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ enemmän kuin 5

☐ muu (esim. kaksonen), mikä

**54.** Onko edellisessä kohdassa mainituilla sisaruksella/sisaruksilla:

○ Erityisen tuen tarvetta

○ tehostetun tuen tarvetta

○ ei kumpaakaan

# Perheen taustatietoja (asuminen)

**55.** Kuinka monta vuotta olette asuneet samalla asuinalueella?

○ 0 - 3

○ 4 - 6

○ 7 - 9

○ 10 - 13

○ yli 13

**56.** Onko lapsenne koulun sijainti vaikuttanut asuinalueenne valintaan?

○ kyllä, miten [                    ]

○ ei

**57.** Mikäli olette kiinnostuneita osallistumaan haastatteluun, pyydän teitä ystävällisesti jättämään yhteystietonne:

# Kiitos vastauksestanne!

[Keskeytä]

## Appendix 7. Lausunto tutkimussuunnitelmasta.

**Turun yliopisto**
**University of Turku**

1 (1)

Lausunto 6/2014

Turun yliopiston eettinen toimikunta

**Lausunto tutkimussuunnitelmasta**

Tutkimuksen nimi — Parental school choice in case of children with special educational need (Vanhempien kouluvalinnat erityisen tuen tarpeessa olevien lasten tapauksessa)

Tutkimuksen yhteyshenkilö — Sonia Lempinen

Tutkimuksesta vastaava henkilö — Sonia Lempinen

Turun yliopiston eettinen toimikunta käsitteli kokouksessaan 10.2.2014 edellä mainittua tutkimussuunnitelmaa ja siihen liittyviä asiakirjoja.

Toimikunta antaa tutkimuksesta puoltavan lausunnon todeten, ettei tutkimus loukkaa ihmisarvoa eikä aiheuta sen laatuista vahinkoa, joka loukkaisi tutkittavien inhimillisiä oikeuksia.

Tutkimuksen hyötyjen ja siihen liittyvien mahdollisten riskien arvioinnin perusteella toimikunta pitää tutkimussuunnitelmaa eettisesti hyväksyttävänä.

Veikko Launis
puheenjohtaja

Ida Similä
sihteeri

Turun yliopisto
University of Turku